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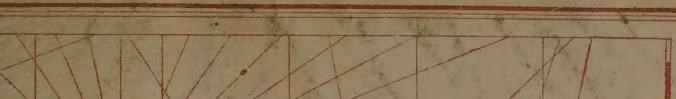

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'IAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORIES

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Of alle maner of men, the mene and the riche,
Worchyng and wandryng, as the worlde asketh."

The Vision of Piers Plowman.

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PREFACE

THESE books have been written in order to depict, for the young of whatever age, some of the conditions and changes which have marked the lives of ordinary folk in past times. They trace, very simply, through the centuries, the development of England on its social side; they deal with the ways in which people lived, earned their daily bread, traded, worshipped God, travelled, amused themselves, or endured the ups and downs of life. The national story in its main outlines has been well and often told; therefore the writers of this series have assumed that their readers have at hand one of the general political accounts. The present series is in any case intended merely as an introduction to a great subject, which, when studied more fully, touches at many points literature, art, music, handicraft, the dance, the drama, and other human activities. The lists of works for additional reading are therefore not to be neglected.

Social history is important, not merely because it gives the background for the great events of the past, but also because it enables us to understand, in some measure, the motives which have swayed or led great masses of plain men. Political movements, in fact, often arise out of social conditions, while great political changes are important because of their influence on everyday human life. The two aspects of history, therefore, the social and the political, ought not to be studied entirely apart. They explain each other.

A famous old school-book translated into English in 1651 gives the following advice to the writers of history books :—

"When matters atchieved are related, this is a storie; when things feigned are told, it is a tale. *Those* let an historian rehears; but to record *these* in chronicles, let him account it a mortal offens. And that it may bee manifest that they are the verie things themselves, not forged devices foisted in, let him set down in his commentaries all the matter, together with the circumstances when, how, where, etc."

These principles the writers in this series have endeavoured to honour.

The writer of this part wishes to thank Professor Paul Mantoux and Mr. R. H. Tawney and Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co. for allowing the use of maps from their books; also to thank Mr. J. A. Gotch and Mr. Basil Oliver and Messrs. B. T. Batsford, Ltd., for permission to use the very beautiful illustrations in their respective books on the "English Home," and on "Village Buildings in East Anglia"; also the Warden and Fellows of All Souls' College for permission to reproduce portions of their estate maps.

E. H. S.

Goldsmith's College,
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PIERS PLOWMAN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORIES

BOOK V

CHAPTER I

THE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN (1600–1760)

Period I. (1600–1660)

In the 17th and early 18th centuries, the life of England was largely dominated by the class that our forefathers called "gentlemen." In politics, in religion, and in social doings they determined the course of affairs. It is well, therefore, at the outset of this period, to gain some idea of the old English gentleman, and picture the life that he led.

In the year 1577 William Harrison thus defined what our forefathers meant by a Gentleman :—

"We, in England, divide our people commonly into four sorts, as gentlemen, citizens or burgesses, yeomen, and artificers or labourers. Of gentlemen the first and chief (next the king) be the prince, dukes, marquesses, earls, viscounts, and barons; and these are called gentlemen of the greater sort . . . and next unto them be knights, esquires, and, last of all, they that are simply called gentlemen. . . . Moreover, as the king doth dub knights, and createth the barons and higher degrees, so gentlemen whose ancestors are not known to come in with William Duke of Normandy . . . do take their beginning in England after this manner in our times. Whosoever studieth the laws of the realm, whoso abideth in the University (giving his mind to his book), or professeth physic and the liberal sciences, or . . . can live without manual labour, and thereto is able and will bear the port, charge, and countenance of a gentleman, he shall for money have a coat and arms bestowed on him by heralds . . . and thereunto, being made so good cheap, be called master (which is the title that men give to esquires and gentlemen) and reputed for a gentleman ever after."

From this it is clear that gentlemen in England were not, as in most foreign countries, a caste apart, claiming social importance merely by right of ancestry. The Herald's College would grant a coat-of-arms, as the mark of a gentleman, practically to any man of liberal education, who was not actually engaged in trade, and who owned a certain amount of land. Younger sons, on the other hand, if they had no land, frequently went off to the towns, and ceased to be gentlemen by becoming tradesmen.

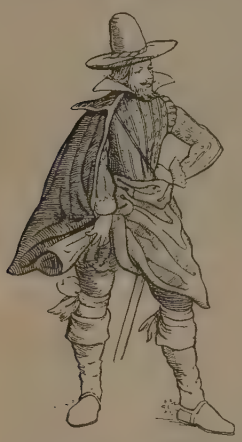

Fig. 1.—An English gentleman of James I.'s Reign.
(*From John Speed's Atlas*, 1611–12.)

The humblest of the class were distinguishable from the yeomanry in little but the possession of a coat-of-arms; for there were many who, though of "gentle blood" and ancient family, were merely freeholders * on the manor of some lord. In a large number of cases, however, the gentleman was lord of a manor, and thus was the most important person of the village.

A gentleman of the 17th century, be his family old or new, was trained to play his part in life not, as in the Middle Ages, by studying the practice of arms, but by the stern discipline of books. In his early years a little boy was frequently sent to the parson of the parish to be taught to read and write; thus little Simonds D'Ewes, up to the age of eight, was taught "exact spelling and the reading of English" by the Vicar of Chardstock, who, he adds, "took care to advise me to a reverent and high esteem of the Scriptures." Next, a child was often sent to one of the free grammar schools, of which a large number were founded in the 15th,

* *See Chap. II., p.* 30.

16th, and early 17th centuries; lastly, he might go to the famous and ancient school of Winchester, or to that of Eton, or to one of the more recent schools, such as Westminster or Harrow. Here he led a very hard life.

The schoolmaster of the time was usually a clergyman. Moreover, he was strongly imbued with the view of original

FIG. 2.—A gentleman and his wife.
(*From an early 17th-century scrap-book.*)

sin in childhood. Rigid obedience was exacted, the birch-rod was freely used, and life was strenuous in the extreme. At Eton the day began at five a.m., when boys got up, made their beds in the bare cheerless dormitories, swept the dirt and dust from under the beds into the middle of the room, and then went down, two and two, to wash face, hands, and neck in the open conduit outside. At six o'clock, morning school began with a Latin Collect. The boys sat in a big room, on forms with no backs. No oral lessons were given, but a single

young schoolmaster or usher, who was probably as cold, sleepy, and hungry as the boys, heard each form in turn say the lessons prepared on the previous day, whether Latin or Greek grammar, or translation. At nine o'clock they went to breakfast. Lessons then went on as before till twelve o'clock, when they had dinner in the school hall. There were three hours' work in the afternoon, and at five o'clock they had a drink of beer. From six to seven the Seventh Form boys taught the others their lessons for the next day ; supper was at seven o'clock, and at eight they went to bed. They did nine hours' work every day, but there was time in between for marbles, hop-scotch, hoops, and other games. The school year was divided into two long terms, with a short holiday at Christmas, and a summer holiday from Ascension Day to Corpus Christi day, which was the Thursday after Trinity Sunday.

We know that the Eton curriculum was widely adopted, and the life was probably very similar in all the public schools. Parents who wished for a more exclusive education often sent their boys to private schools ; Sir Simonds D'Ewes, whose parents were strongly Puritan, was sent for a time to one in London, where, amongst other accomplishments, he learned to take copious notes of sermons. Girls also were sometimes sent to private schools.

From school a boy went at the age of fourteen or fifteen to one of the two Universities, where his life was still one of hard study, and strict regime. Later, because so many gentlemen became Justices of the Peace, it was very usual to send a young man to study law at one of the four Inns of Court in London, either at the Middle or Inner Temple, or at Lincoln's Inn or Gray's Inn. Lastly, if he could afford it, he sometimes travelled abroad. He then settled down in the old family home.

The life of the English gentleman of this period was closely connected with the county and village in which he lived. To the greater gentry, including the peers, the king looked to rule their respective counties, in the offices of Lord-Lieutenant, Deputy-Lieutenant, High Sheriff, and Justice of the Peace.* If elected to parliament, or summoned before the council, or otherwise called up on business, they might have to visit London; but under James I. there was no London Season, and the king disapproved of their staying long in town. In July, 1603, James issued the following Proclamation :—

"The Solemnities of our Coronation being now performed . . . we have entered into consideration of the state of the several parts of the body of our Realm, and therein do find that the absence of the Noblemen and Gentlemen, which are used to reside there in several quarters, is accompanied with great inconvenience, as well in the want of relief which the poorer sort did receive by their ordinary Hospitality, as also chiefly in the defect of Government."

Already, indeed, men were complaining of the decay of the good old English custom of open housekeeping; amongst the well-to-do the taste for coming to London and staying near the Court had begun to grow. The well-known ballad called the "Old and Young Courtier," said to have been printed first in James I.'s reign, became very popular after the Restoration, when the change was much more marked. The following is an extract :—

"An old song made by an aged old pate
Of an old worshipful gentleman who had a great estate
That kept a brave old house at a bountiful rate
And an old porter to relieve the poor at his gate;
Like an old courtier of the Queen's
And the Queen's old courtier.

* * * * *

"But to his eldest son his house and land he assigned,
Charging him well to keep the old bountiful mind,
To be good to his old tenants, and to his neighbours to be kind:
But in the ensuing ditty you shall hear how he was inclin'd;
Like a young courtier of the King's
And the King's young courtier.

* * * * *

* *See Chap. IX.*

"With new titles bought with his father's old gold,
For which sundry of his ancestors' old manors are sold;
And this is the course most of our new gallants hold,
Which makes that good housekeeping * is now grown so cold,
Among the young courtiers of the King,
Or the King's young courtiers."

Meanwhile, however, the smaller country gentry, especially in counties remote from London, rarely went farther afield than a day's hunting would carry them, or a ride to the nearest market town, or a visit to a neighbouring gentleman. Both in hunting and at market they rubbed shoulders familiarly with freeholders, copyholders, and tenants, and often called them by their Christian names. The yeoman farmers of the period, as we learn from a reminiscence of Defoe, maintained an attitude of sturdy independence towards the gentry, which must have kept social relations exceedingly wholesome. It is likely that the cringing dependence which so many people associate with old English life grew up only after the Restoration.

A picture of the life of one of the more prominent gentlemen of Buckinghamshire may be drawn from the papers of the Verney family. Their seat lay at Middle Claydon, in the pleasant vale of Aylesbury, then a land of open-field villages, noted for its corn-growing. Away to the south-east the sky-line was broken by the soft curves of the chalky Chiltern Hills, grass-covered in places, or clothed with beech-woods, the haunt of thieves and outlaws. High up in those hills stood the home of John Hampden, and through a pass in them ran the road to London.

Middle Claydon had been bought for the family late in the 15th century, by Sir Ralph Verney, Lord Mayor of London. In the Tudor Period the old manor house had been rebuilt, and in the 17th century it was a picturesque gabled building,

* *Housekeeping here means keeping open house for neighbours and strangers.*

on the **H**-shaped ground plan so common in that period.* The central part contained on the ground floor the great hall, entered through a porch in the north courtyard, and also the hall-kitchen; each had a large open chimney with chimney corners; and these two chimneys ran up the central part of the house, and were the only ones for the entire building. High up in the thickness of one of them was a "priests' hole," or

FIG. 3.—Old timber and thatched cottages at East Claydon, Bucks, near the home of the Verney family.

small secret chamber, in which ten men could stand and hide. The hall itself was wainscoted and tapestried, and had a floor of oaken timber. But we read of a separate dining-room and drawing-room for the family, with leathern carpets, and green and red velvet furniture; for the gentleman's family now lived far less in public than in earlier times.

The house stood on a gentle slope sheltered from the east and north. A few yards away stood the little stone church

* *Cf. the plan of a husbandman's house of this period, on page* 29.

of Middle Claydon, shadowed by ancient yews. Not far off was a group of picturesque out-buildings very needful in a big country house of the period. There were the dairy, the millhouse for grinding corn, the malthouse, the brew-house, the bakehouse and the slaughterhouse. There were also the blacksmith's shop, the carpenter's shop and the painter's shop, the laundry, the woodyard and the sawpit. Besides these there were the farm-buildings, such as barns, cattle-houses, pigstyes, and dove-cots.

The owner of this great house, in the year 1620, was Sir Edmund Verney, born in 1590, and married at the age of twenty-two to Margaret daughter of a friend and neighbour, Sir Thomas Denton of Hillesden. Up to the year 1620, Sir Edmund and Dame Margaret had lived in London, since Middle Claydon house had been leased for a long period to a stranger. In that year, however, his wife and children went down to live on the estate, while Sir Edmund rode up and down to and from town as his duties at Court demanded. His London house was at first in the fashionable suburban retreat of Drury Lane, and after 1634 he lived in a large new house which he rented in Covent Garden, near by.

In the absence of her husband, Dame Verney managed the estate, in addition to all the work which ordinarily fell to a country gentleman's wife. Every lady of Dame Verney's position had to superintend the spinning of flax into thread, preparatory to sending it down into the village to be woven for house-linen. She was busy in the still-room making from herbs and simples grown in her garden medicines for use in her household and in the village. In the fruit season she was in the preserving-room, cooking and preserving fruit, or making such drinks as currant and elderberry wine ; spring-time saw the making of cowslip wine ; for it must be remembered that neither tea nor coffee was in use till after 1650. Fine and

coarse needlework, the making of clothes, the embroidering of bed-spreads and bed-hangings, and the upholstery of furniture also kept busy the mistress of a big house. Also she very generally cared for the poor of the village, and often acted as amateur doctor.

In the management of the estate in her husband's absence Dame Verney had, as time went on, the aid of Ralph, the eldest of her four sons. Born in 1612, Ralph Verney was still a student at Oxford when, in 1629, he married Mary Blacknall, a rich young heiress of thirteen years of age. The girl-wife remained with her own relations for two years longer while her husband was still at college; but from 1631 she lived at Claydon with her husband and mother-in-law, and there a baby, Edmund, was born. Ralph Verney and his father were close friends, though men of very different temperament. Sir Edmund was gay, humorous and young-hearted, and of warm, enthusiastic nature; Ralph was a youth of gentle but grave disposition, strong and reserved.

The Buckinghamshire gentry and yeomanry alike were noted for their opposition to the political views of Charles I.; many of them were also staunch Puritans. Sir Edmund, on the whole, agreed with his neighbours, but the old Tudor attitude of personal loyalty was stronger in him than in them. Both Sir Edmund and Sir Ralph were elected to the Long Parliament; but when the split into parties came, at the end of 1641, they found themselves in opposite camps. The sad division that ensued in this happy family is characteristic of widespread suffering in the gentlemen's houses of England. Sir Edmund and his three younger sons became cavaliers, while Ralph was attached to the party of parliament; and Sir Edmund was killed at Edgehill in the first battle of the Civil War. The third son, Edmund Verney the younger, wrote to his brother on September 14, 1642—

"Brother, what I feared is proved too true, which is your being against the king; give me leave to tell you in my opinion 'tis most unhandsomely done, and it grieves my heart to think that my father already and I, who so dearly love and esteem you, should be bound in consequence (because in duty to our king) to be your enemy. I hear 'tis a great grief to my father."

No answer came to this letter, so in February, 1643, he wrote—

"Though I am tooth and nail for the king's cause, and shall endure so to the death, whatsoever his fortune be, yet sweet brother, let not this my opinion (for it is guided by my conscience) . . . cause a diffidence of my true love to you."

To this Sir Ralph replied, in April, 1643—

"Brother, I know not how safely this letter may come to your hands, therefore I shall only tell you that in October I received your letter dated September 14th, which was so full of sharpness, that I rather chose to forbear answering it (being willing to avoid all matter of dispute), than return such a reply (as that language did deserve) to a brother I love so well. I have now received another from you in another strain by Mr. Rogers, for which I thank you, and let me intreat you to stick to the resolution you have taken concerning me, and I shall promise to do the like to you. . . . Your truly affectionate brother to serve you. R. V."

But though Ralph Verney was loyal to the Long Parliament, the time came when he too fell into disfavour with the ruling party. In 1643 parliament determined that all members must sign the Solemn League and Covenant * whereby they undertook to make drastic changes in the Church of England. Ralph Verney, though a Puritan, could not in conscience sign the Covenant, and he absented himself from parliament. An order was then made that those who absented themselves should have their estates sequestered. Ralph Verney was therefore obliged to quit England with his wife and two elder children, and to live for some years an exile in France; but his little three-year-old boy Jack was too young to travel, and was left with his nurse at home.

A similar fate befell hundreds of royalist, and not a few roundhead gentlemen in the years that followed, and with

* *See p.* 201.

similar results. In the absence of Sir Ralph and Dame Mary, Claydon House was again and again made a barracks for roundhead soldiers. When Dame Mary came home on a visit in 1647 she found a scene of wild disorder. The house was full of soldiers. She wrote thus to her husband—

"The house is most lamentably furnished, all the linnen is quite worne out . . . the feather bedds that were waled up are much eaten with Ratts . . . the cloath of the Musk-coloured stools is spoyled, and the dining-room chairs in Raggs."

Quantities of trees on the estate had been cut down by order of parliamentary commanders for garrison use; and horses and carts had been ruthlessly carried away. Worse still, the little boy Jack had been much neglected.

"I must give thee some account of our own babyes heare. For Jack his leggs are most miserable, crooked as evor I saw any child's, and yett thank god he goes very strongly . . . and truly I think would be much finer if we had him in ordering, for they lett him eate anythinge that he hath a mind toe, and he keeps a very ill diett; he hath an Imperfection in his speech, and of all things he hates his booke, truly tis time you had him with you for he learns noething heare."

But the worst sorrow brought by his exile befell Sir Ralph Verney in 1650, when Dame Mary, worn out by the troubles of seven years, died at Blois, in France.

While most of the gentry of England were, up to the outbreak of the civil wars, living a life of considerable culture and refinement, here and there, especially in remote uplands in the north, life still retained some of the wilder elements of the 15th century. From May, 1617, to March, 1618, one of the lesser gentlemen of Lancashire kept his diary, which preserves for us some features of that life. In a high valley of the Lancashire slopes of the Pennines, close to the upper waters of the Ribble, lay the manor of Downham. It was only a mile from the Yorkshire border, and it was owned by young Mr. Nicholas Assheton, of an old Yorkshire and Lancashire family. Though he had wealthy relations seated at Middleton in Yorkshire, and at Whalley Abbey, Nicholas

owed his own estate to the gift of a great-uncle, who was a successful lawyer; and his portionless younger brother, Alexander, had gone to London and become a draper in St. Paul's Churchyard.

We may picture Nicholas in 1617 as a tall, vigorous ruddy-faced person, with a jolly open countenance. He went regularly to church on Sundays, as all law-abiding people should, and noted the text of the sermon. Then he usually repaired to the ale-house, and spent a shilling or so on wine. Sometimes he dined with the parson, and had a hot argument about the wearing of the surplice. In the week he looked after his estate, and for the rest he hunted hot and hard, and made merry with his neighbours through all the country-side. His wife, Frances, was the daughter of a near neighbour, Mr. Richard Greenacres, of Worston Hall, and we find "Father Greenacres," his wife, his eldest son John, and his sister "Aunt Besse," dropping in to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Assheton, and all adjourning as the custom was, after dinner, to drink ale in the village inn.

The great joy of Nicholas' life, however, was hunting. Those high hill streams were the haunt of the otter and badger, and the home of countless fish. Foxes were so common that churchwardens were willing to give a shilling a head as a

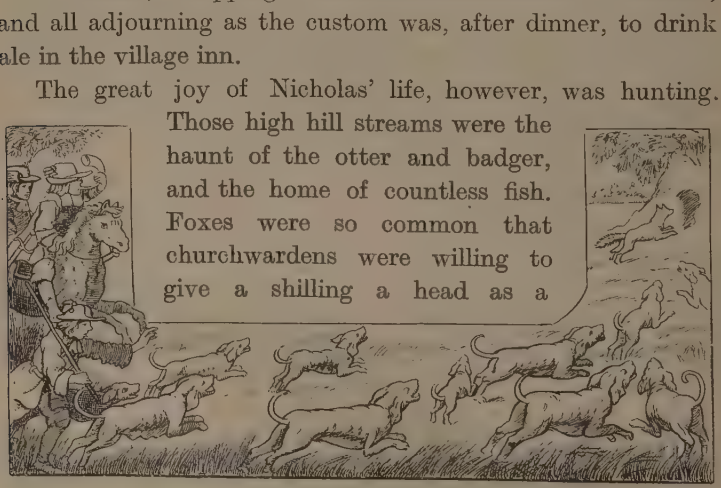

FIG. 4.—A 17th century hunting scene.
(*From John Ogilby's "Itinerarium Angliæ,"* 1675.)

reward for killing them, and the heads could be seen nailed as trophies on many a church door. Hares and rabbits abounded, and so did deer. Whole weeks in the diary are given to the record of one unbroken round of hunting. Sometimes when very bad weather interrupted a day's hunting, Nicholas and his friends repaired to the wine cellars of a neighbour's house, and had a drinking debauch, or, as the diary has it, "were too foolish."

In June, 1617, the diary records an event illustrative of the backward state of that part of England. Away to the north-east of Downham, at Raydale, a lonely and beautiful side-valley of Wensleydale in Yorkshire, lived an aunt of Nicholas, who had married Mr. Robinson of Raydale House. On June 4, at sunset, when her husband was far away in London, Mistress Robinson, who was left in the house with her three children, seven retainers, and two maids, found the place surrounded and attacked. The assailant was Sir Thomas Metcalfe, a neighbour, who had come with forty men, armed with "gunns, bills, picks, swords, and other warlike provision" to claim the house as his. Mistress Robinson boldly went out to speak to the intruders, demanding their right to attack her house, but, as the diary says—

"They would not suffer her to goe into the house for her stockings and head-dressing and shoes, wich shee wanted, but shee was forced to goe a long myle, with her little children, to a towne called Buske, and thence a foote to Morton,* two miles thence."

The retainers and maidservants meanwhile pluckily defended the house. Next day, Mistress Robinson applied to the two nearest Justices of the Peace, but could get no assistance from them. She then sent a messenger to her nephew at Downham, and herself rode off to York, to the Council of the North, which was the northern Star Chamber. On receiving her urgent request for help, Nicholas Assheton set

* *He evidently meant Worton, which is about two miles from Busk.*

off with some men, and riding post-haste up streams, and over moors of the Pennines, reached Morton that night. On June 7 Mistress Robinson returned from York, and was followed by the Sergeant of Mace and Pursuivant; this aroused the neighbouring Justice of the Peace, and Sir Thomas Metcalfe and five or six retainers were arrested. This case exactly resembles the disorders of livery and maintenance * with which in the late 15th and early 16th centuries the Council sitting in the Star Chamber had so frequently to deal; and it shows how violence and law-breaking still lingered in the hills of the North.

Nicholas Assheton died in 1625, so that he saw none of the stirring events of Charles I.'s reign. He represents, however, a whole class, the small country gentry of remote districts. When the civil dissensions came, many of these took no part in them, but lived quietly on their estates, as did Richard Assheton, son and heir to Nicholas.† Thus, while the events of the period 1642 to 1660 profoundly and permanently affected hundreds of families like the Verneys, the Hampdens, the Hydes, who suffered death, exile and loss of estates on one side or the other, lesser families are to be found even in the early 18th century leading a life not unlike that of Nicholas Assheton in James I.'s reign.

Period II. (1660–1760)

The period of the great Civil War, the Commonwealth and Protectorate, forms a dividing line in the history of the gentry. From the year 1660 we may trace the operation of causes which led, on the one hand, to a profound change in the manners and tastes of the greater members of the class, and, on the other, to the slow decline in numbers of the

* *See Book III., Chap. X.* † *Cp., Henry Best, Chap. II.*

smaller gentry. These causes are connected with continental influences due to the long period of exile which so many of the class endured after the outbreak of the great Civil War.

In the first place, many of the older men, like John Evelyn, who had travelled in Holland, Flanders, France, Italy, and Switzerland, brought back new ideas. They wanted to rebuild their houses, to replant and extend their gardens, and alter their methods of farming their estates.* They had new ideas about internal and external trade, and began to look with critical eyes on the bad roads and the inferior shipping of England.† They had also adopted continental tastes in literature, art, and the drama. As John Evelyn said in 1661, after seeing "Hamlet"—

"The old plays began to disgust this refined age, since his Majesty had been so long abroad."

In the second place, many of the younger generation who had been educated abroad between 1642 and 1660 came home with expensive foreign ways, and out of touch with the life of the old village. For example, young Edmund Verney, son and heir of Sir Ralph, born at Middle Claydon in 1636, went abroad with his father and mother in 1643, and lived chiefly in France and Holland till 1656; he also travelled in Italy. Edmund thus lost the healthy democratic training of an English grammar school. The family lived chiefly in the little French town of Blois, and here he had French tutors.

"Mun, poore child, is a woeful schollar, though neither himselfe nor Master will believe it,"

wrote his father. In 1652, at the age of sixteen, Sir Ralph sent him to the Hague, in Holland, to study under an English scholar, formerly Professor of Greek at Cambridge, but now in exile. His new tutor complained that he was easy-going, idle and slovenly, and too fond of "a goodly outward show and vain

* *See Chap. III.* † *See Chaps. IV. and V.*

pomp." While living at the Hague, Edmund mixed in gay society. When, therefore, he returned to Middle Claydon at the age of twenty, a young man of city manners and expensive tastes, he was out of sympathy with the old rural life. He wrote to a friend—

"My father is courteous and kind enough to me . . . and seems very well pleased with me, and would be more yet, if I could dispose my humour to affect what I hate—Rusticq matters and effeminate things—all which aforesaid I do contemplate with some wonder."

In 1662 he married the heiress of East Claydon, a neighbouring village to his father's lordship of Middle Claydon; and he now settled down as a country squire. He was good-tempered and open-handed, but lacked the austerer virtues of his father and grandfather. He read French books, and wrote all his letters in French. When he died, some years before Sir Ralph, he left his estate deeply in debt.

This type of education affected very many for the worse. They brought back from France not merely expensive tastes, but an admiration for social caste which had perhaps never before been typical of England. We now begin to get protests against the rise of humbler men into the ranks of gentry, such as the following, written in 1659 :—

"The English, especially the Gentry, are so much given to Prodigality and Slothfulness, that Estates are oftener spent and sold than in any other Country . . . whereby it comes to pass that *Cooks, Vintners, Innkeepers*, and such mean Fellows, enrich themselves and beggar and insult over the *Gentry* . . . not only those but *Taylors, Dancing Masters* and such *Trifling Fellows* arrive to that Riches and Pride, as to ride in their Coaches, keep their Summer Houses, and be served in Plate, etc., an insolence insupportable in other well-governed Nations."

A writer in 1735 remarking on the same spirit, says—

"I remember a West Country baronet, distinguished alike by his fiery face and fiery zeal, being opposed on the bench by a Justice who had the reason on his side, said in answer to his reason, 'Fine times, indeed, when gentlemen must be taken up by Blue Apron men,' alluding to his brother Justice having been a shop-keeper. The latter retorted, 'Whatever the Blue Apron man has is his own,' alluding to a very heavy incumbrance which the baronet could never clear his estate of."

This aristocratic tone was reinforced from the Restoration onwards by a second influence. The memory of the king's "martyrdom," the recollection of the despotism of an army composed of farmers, craftsmen and the like, the remembrance of old families of royalists ousted from their estates by upstart Puritans, all contributed to make the village people humble and reverential to the gentry. The doctrine of divine right kingship, preached Sunday by Sunday from the pulpit, was closely coupled with instruction in due reverence to one's "betters." Alexander Pope, in his amusing sketch "Memoirs of P. P., Clerk of this Parish," illustrated the feelings of a parish clerk of the early 18th century.

"Thou may'st conceive, oh Reader, with what concern I perceived the eyes of the congregation fixed upon me, when I first took my place at the feet of the priest. When I raised the psalm how did my voice quiver for fear! And when I arranged the shoulders of the minister with the surplice how did my joints tremble under me! I said within myself 'Remember, Paul, thou standest before men of high worship, the wise Mr. Justice Freeman, the grave Mr. Justice Jonson, the good Lady Jones, the two virtuous gentlewomen her daughters, nay the great Sir Thomas Truby, knight and baronet, and my young Master the Esquire, who shall one day be lord of this manor.'"

This aristocratic tone steadily grew amongst the greater gentry during the 18th century, and had both its good and its bad sides. We find the great gentleman living amongst the village people like some Indian "Nabob," benevolent, perhaps, but proudly superior, like one of a different race. Many historians quote Addison's picture of Sir Roger de Coverley, drawn in 1711, as typical of the relations of a gentleman to his dependants. Yet Addison is careful to note that he considers Sir Roger peculiar; his easy benevolence is evidently old-fashioned—a survival from the 17th century.

"He is a gentleman that is very singular in his Behaviour. . . ; There is one Particular which I have seldom seen but at Sir Roger's: it is usual in all other Places, that Servants fly from the Parts of the House through which their Master is passing; on the contrary here they industriously place themselves in his way."

What struck Addison as singular in Sir Roger was the absence of that haughty reserve of manner which was the 18th century hall-mark of good breeding. Addison's famous description of Sir Roger's behaviour in church is probably more generally characteristic.

"As soon as the Sermon is finished, no Body presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the Church. The Knight walks down from his Seat in the Chancel between a double Row of his Tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side, and every now and then enquires how such an one's Wife, or Mother, or Son, or Father do, whom he does not see at Church; which is understood as a secret Reprimand to the Person that is absent."

Another influence which tended to accentuate the new aloofness of the great gentleman from the village was the practice, steadily growing from the Restoration onwards, of visiting London for the Season, or of staying at one of the inland watering-places such as Bath, Tunbridge Wells, Epsom, or Buxton.* In France, Paris was the centre of society; so those gentlemen who could afford it had now London houses. The fields to the north of St. James' Palace, Charing Cross, and the Strand, were being rapidly covered with buildings; thus Sir Roger de Coverley's house was in Soho. The fashion of travelling on the Continent also grew steadily in the 18th century, and many gentlemen made a practice of buying in Italy pictures and other art-treasures with which to stock their country houses.

Once back in the village, their ideal was to lead the life of a little village king. Many gentlemen gave their stewards directions to buy up, on every opportunity, the lands of the freeholders †; they became not merely lords of the manor ‡ as of old, but landlords in the modern sense, with tenant farmers dependent upon their goodwill. Their rule was a despotism, though often a very benevolent one.

Their houses had to be transformed in keeping with

* *See p.* 176. † *See p.* 30. ‡ *See p.* 30.

continental conceptions. The classical styles of architecture were now in vogue, and the quaint Elizabethan manor houses, with their irregular roofs and chimneys, were in some cases pulled down, and in others completely altered by the addition of frontage and wings built in regular and austere straight lines. In the 18th century, the Verney's house at Middle Claydon was transformed, and at John Hampden's house at Great Hampden only an occasional glimpse can now be seen of red-tiled roof or brick chimney over-topping the grey 18th century parapets.

Much money was also spent on gardening. In keeping with the architecture of the house, the clipped yew or holly-hedge, the yew-tree cut into geometrical figures, the stiff symmetrical flower-bed, were the fashion from Charles II.'s reign till late in the reign of George II.

All these things cost money. To obtain it, many of the gentry embarked on agricultural improvements ; * some married wealthy city heiresses ; some went into politics, where there was much money to be made ; some invested money in trade undertakings. The servants of the East India Company who had made fortunes at Bombay, Madras, or Calcutta by private trade,† returned to England to live in splendour as "Nabobs." By the year 1760, the whole standard of life in a gentleman's house had risen.

It was in the attempt to compete with this new style of living that the lesser gentry were ruined. Macaulay, in the third chapter of his History, has given a famous description of the country gentleman of the end of the 17th century, a description often challenged as incorrect. If applied to the lesser gentry, it is probably substantially true. Seldom going beyond their own neighbourhood, mixing much with farmers, devoted to field sports and hard drinking, the small

* *See Chap. III.* † *See Chap. V.*

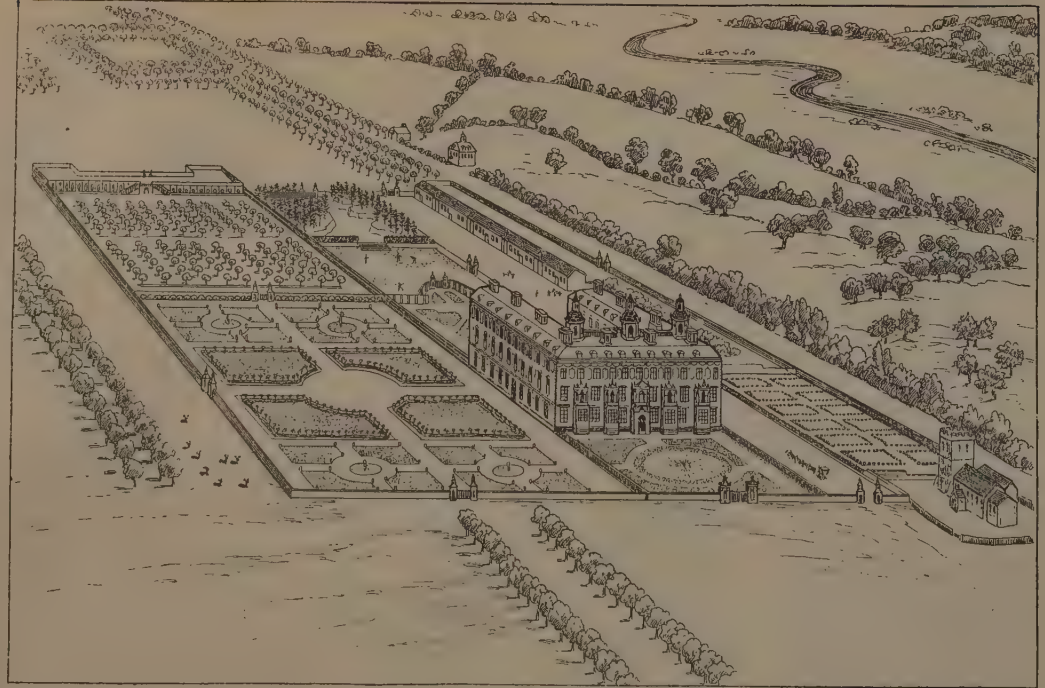

FIG. 5.—Hamstead Marshall, in Berkshire, the great house and grounds of William, Lord Craven, a royalist who lived abroad from 1631 to the Restoration. His estates were confiscated and sold in 1651. The original house was Jacobean, as the front shows. At the Restoration Lord Craven recovered it. He added a top storey, and two great wings, between 1662 and 1686. The picture shows the entrance gateway (coach and six horses), the church, the stables, the newly-planted avenue and deer-park, the ornamental gardens and terrace, the bowling-green, the artificial wild garden. Outside is the open country.

squires still led much the same life as Nicholas Assheton had done. At the beginning of the 18th century there were large numbers of them. A writer of 1772 explains their subsequent fate.

"An income of £200 or £300 a year in the last age was reckoned a decent hereditary patrimony, or a good establishment for life; but now . . . all country gentlemen give in to so many local expenses, and reckon themselves so much on a par, that a small estate is but another word for starving; of course, few are to be found, but they are bought up by greater neighbours, or become mere farmers."

Arthur Young, writing in 1773, says—

"Gentlemen of paternal estates of from 3 to 6 or 7 hundred pounds a year, are, in this rich and extravagant age, almost beggars. Thirty years ago they were able to make a genteel appearance; they could bring up their families with some decency, keep a tolerable table, dress, and live like gentlemen. But now what a change! Let taxes and repairs, rates and tythes, be deducted from their rents, and they have just enough left to support the dignity of their neighbours. . . . What sort of a figure is made by gentlemen whose ancestors well supported the credit of their families upon that patrimony, which is now the object of raillery and contempt? The luxury of the age, though it has contributed to render us a wealthy, potent and mighty nation, has certainly had the effect of burying whole ranks of the people, useful and valuable ranks, in the dust. . . . At church, the liveries of a tobacconist carry all the admiration of the village; and how can the daughter of the ancient but decayed gentleman stand the competition, at an assembly, with the point, diamonds, and tissues of a haberdasher's nieces?"

While, therefore, the century after the Restoration saw the rise of many great families of gentry who lived in a state more splendid than their fathers had known, it saw also the rapid disappearance of many of the small gentry who were ruined by the attempt to rival their richer neighbours. Many sold their lands and went off to take part in the rising industries. Others perhaps went out to the colonies. Others sank into the class of mere farmers, or even of agricultural labourers. Their descendants are probably living in cottage homes in the English villages of to-day.

BOOK LIST

Author.	Book.	Publisher.
Shakespeare ..	The Merry Wives of Windsor ..	—
Wilson, J. Dover	Life in Shakespeare's England ..	*Cambridge Press.*
Bradley, R. M. ..	The English Housewife in the 17th and 18th Centuries.	*Arnold.*
Verney, F. P. and M. M.	Memoirs of the Verney Family (4 vols.)	*Longmans.*
Halliwell, J. O. (Ed.)	Autobiography of Sir Symonds D'Ewes	—
Lee, Sydney (Ed.)	Autobiography of Lord Herbert of Cherbury	*Scott.*
F. R. Raines (Ed.)	The Journal of Nicholas Assheton, 1617–1618	(*Chetham Society.*)
Hutchinson, Lucy	Life of Colonel Hutchinson ..	*Dent.*
Osborne, Dorothy	Letters to Sir William Temple, 1652–1654	,,
Ellwood, Thomas	Autobiography	*Routledge.*
Evelyn, J. ..	Diary, 1641–1706	*Dent.*
Pepys, S. ..	Diary, 1659–1669	,,
Addison, J. ..	Selected Essays from the Spectator	*Blackie.*
Ditchfield, P. H.	The Manor Houses of England ..	*Batsford.*
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Addy, S. O. ..	The Evolution of the English House	*Sonnenschein.*
Defoe, D.	The Complete English Gentleman	*Nutt.*
Calthrop, D. C. ..	English Costume (4 vols.) ..	*Black.*
Planché, J. R. ..	History of British Costume ..	*Bell.*
Fairholt	History of Costume	,,
Wright, Thomas	Homes of other Days	*Trübner & Co.*

CHAPTER II

THE VILLAGE AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF THE SMALL WORKING FARMER (1600–1660)

THE opening of the 17th century may be described as the golden age of the small working farmer, and possibly, in many respects, the happiest period in English village life. It was an age when poets and prose-writers glorified husbandry. In a book for farmers, published in 1613, we read—

"A husbandman is the master of the earth, turning sterility and barrenness into fruitfulness and increase, whereby . . . it is his labour which giveth bread to all men. The labour of the husbandman giveth liberty to all vocations, arts, mysteries* and trades to follow their several functions with peace and industry, for the filling and emptying of his barns is the increase and prosperity of all their labours."

Let us try to picture these old-time village people in their homes. The village, approached by a rough unmetalled road, half overgrown with grass, was a picturesque assortment of quaint houses. These were grouped round a green, or along a single main street. Built by village craftsmen out of local materials, no two houses were alike. In most counties the houses were built on a solid framework of timber. Where oak was abundant, as in forest districts, the intervening spaces were narrow, and were filled with thin wooden laths, nailed together, and covered with plaster. Where timber was scarce there were wider spaces, which were filled in with "wattle and daub" composed of small round hazel sticks

* *Mystery as used here was derived from the same word as Minister, and meant Handicraft or Occupation.*

imbedded in kneaded clay ; the whole was then often covered with white plaster, on which the craftsman drew with a stick

FIG. 6.—The village street, at Kersey in Suffolk, showing how farms and cottages were built together in the centre of the village lands. These houses are chiefly of timber plastered over.

FIG. 7.—A timber house at Latimer in Buckinghamshire, built in the 16th century. The dormer-windows rise straight up from the front, and are not set back in the roof as in many 17th century houses.

rough patterns to suit his fancy. The roof was thatched with straw or reeds. In counties where clay was abundant, houses of small warm-coloured bricks with red-tiled roofs were

FIG. 8.—A 17th century cottage, formerly standing at Stanstead, near Long Melford, Suffolk; dated in the gable, 1653. Built of timber, covered with plaster, and showing patterns made in the plaster by the local craftsman. Massive wooden brackets supported the overhanging timbers of each floor. There was a quaint knocker and diamond-paned windows.

beginning to be built, as, for example, in Norfolk and Suffolk. In the counties where stone was quarried this was used for building, and stone tiles were used for roofing.

Most of the houses in the village were very small. Cottagers

and even small farmers still often lived in little one-roomed or two-roomed dwellings, with cattle, pigs and hens under the same roof. Bishop Hall, who wrote in the first part of the 17th century, thus describes these one-roomed houses—

> "Of one bay's breadth, God wot, a silly * cote
> Whose thatched spars are furred with sluttish soote
> A whole inch thick, shining like blackmore's brows
> Through smoke that downe the headless barrel blows
> At his bed's feete feeden his stalled teame,
> His swine beneath, his pullen † o'er the beam."

The larger husbandman lived in a better house with separate rooms in it and out-buildings attached. The main

FIG. 9.—A brick farm-house at Brill in Buckinghamshire, built in the middle of the 17th century.

feature of the farm-house was the stone-flagged kitchen and living-room. This was a low room, roofed with dark oaken rafters, on which hung guns and implements of various kinds. The walls were sometimes oak-panelled, sometimes merely plastered. On one side of the room was the great fireplace 6 or 8 feet wide, with chimney so capacious that a broad patch of sky was visible on peering up it. On either side of the fireplace were cosy chimney corners, in which stood the wooden arm-chairs of the master and mistress,

* *Silly = simple or innocent.*
† *Pullen = hens. Cp. modern pullet = young hen.*

while a narrow-seated, high-backed settle projected into the room. A fire of wooden logs was supported on strong fire-dogs of wrought iron. In Sussex and Surrey iron fire-backs of quaint design were used to throw out the heat. If you looked up the chimney you would see flitches of ham and bacon, hanging there to smoke. In this kitchen centred the indoor life of the farm. Here the farmer and his wife and family, and the maids and men of the farm, had meals together, seated at the narrow but massive oaken table 10 feet long, with its six strong legs joined by a bottom rail, against which plough-boys could kick their feet. The master and mistress presided at the top and bottom, seated on armed, wooden chairs ; the rest sat on forms. Against the wall stood the great oak dresser, bright with pewter plates and mugs, and with a massive silver salt-cellar, the pride of the household. Somewhere in the kitchen stood the spinning-wheels and the loom. The sunlight came in through tiny diamond-paned windows, but these at night were closely shuttered and barred. Then, by the leaping firelight, and the glimmer of long rushlights,* the household gathered round the hearth, the farmer to snore in the chimney corner, his wife and daughters and the maids to turn the spinning-wheel, his sons and the farm-hands to mend wooden rakes or home-made harness for an hour before stumbling off to bed.†

In the early 17th century, the prosperity of the husbandmen in certain counties was leading some of them into more

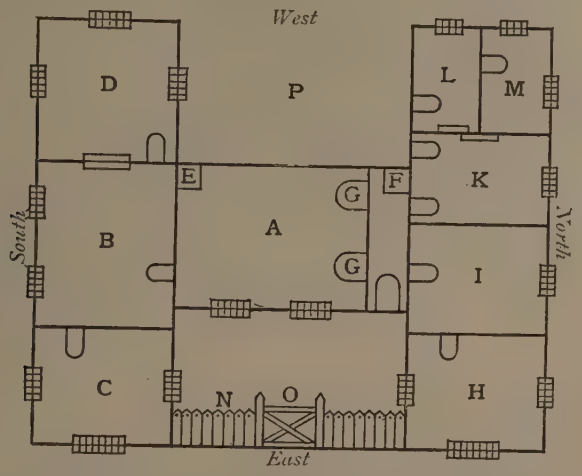
** Rushlights were made of common soft rush, soaked in water, dried in the sun, and then dipped in grease and dried. Early rushlights, still used at this time, were only dipped once or twice, and resembled a taper. They were held upright in ornamental iron holders. In times of extravagance the rush was bent double so that " the candle was burned at both ends." Later on they were dipped many times, and resembled a modern candle. A good rushlight, 2 feet 6 inches long, would burn for about an hour.*

† Beds for the family were four-posted, sometimes with angels carved at the head, and with palliasses of plaited rushes to hold the mattress.

ambitious styles of living. Gervase Markham, in "The English Husbandman," written in 1613, gave advice to one about to build a farm-house. He further supplied a plan, reproduced on the opposite page, with these words—

"Here you behold the modell of a plaine Country man's house, without plaster or imbosture [= ornament], because it is to be intended, that it is as well to be built of studde [= timber] and plaster, as of lime and stone; or if timber be not plentifull, it may be built of coarser wood, and covered with lime and haire. . . . Now you shall further understand, that on the South side of your house, you shall plant your Garden and Orchard, as well for the prospect therof to all your best rooms, as also because your house will bee a defence against the Northerne coldnesse, whereby your fruits will much better prosper. You shall on the West side of your house, within your inward dairy and kitchin Court, fence in a large base Court [= court for the outbuildings], in the midst whereof would be a faire large Pond, well stoned and gravelled in the bottom, in which your Cattell may drink, and Horses, when necessitie shall urge, be washt. Neere to this Pond you shall build your Dovecoate, for Pigeons delight much in the water. . . . On the North side of your base-court you shall build your Stables, Ox-house, Cow-house, and Swine-coates, the dores and windows opening all to the South. On the South side of the base-court you shall build your Hay-barns, Corn-barns, Pullen-houses for Henes, Capons, Duckes and Geese, your French Kiln, and Malting floors, with such-like necessaries; and over crosse betwixt both these sides you shall build your bound [= strongly built] Hovels, to carrie your Pease, of good and sufficient timber, under which you shall place when they are out of use your Carts, Wains, Tumbrels [= farm-carts], Ploughes, Harrowes, and such like, together with Plough-timber, and axle-trees; all which would very carefully be kept from wet, which of all things doth soonest rot and consume them. And thus much of the *Husbandman's* house, and the necessaries thereto belonging."

In order to understand the life of the 17th century village, we must realise the various classes of people and their relation to their landlord and to the land. The modern English village represents, as a rule, three well-defined sections of people. First there are the landowners, sometimes living in the neighbourhood, but sometimes non-resident, and, if so, scarcely known to the village people. Secondly, there are the farmers, large or small, who are usually rent-paying tenants of the landlords, though sometimes they own their own land.



Plan of an English Husbandman's House.

A Signifieth the Great Hall.
B The dining Parlor for entertainment of strangers.
C An inward Closset within the Parlor for the Mistresses use, for necessaries.
D A strangers lodging within the Parlor.
E A staire-case into the roomes over the Parlor.
F A staire-case into the Good-mans roomes over the Kitchin and Buttery.
G The Skreene in the Hall.
H An inward Cellar within the Buttery, which may serve for a Larder.
I The Buttery.
K The Kitchin, in whose Range may be placed a Brewing Lead, and convenient Ovens, the Brewing Vessels adjoyning.
L The Dairy House for necessary businesse.
M The Milke-house.
N A faire sawne Pale before the formost Court.
O The Great Gate to ride in at to the Hall dore.
P A place where a Pumpe would be placed to serve the offices of the house.

This figure signifieth the Dores of the house.

This figure signifieth the Windowes of the house.

This figure signifieth the Chimneyes of the house.

FIG. 10. (*From Gervase Markham's "English Husbanaman,"* 1613.)

Thirdly, there are the farm-labourers, who work for a weekly wage, and who, except for allotments, neither own land nor rent it; they are therefore dependent on the farmers for a livelihood.

In the 17th century village the relations of the people to each other were very different. In the first place there was usually one principal landowner who was also lord of the manor.* This meant that while he owned, in the modern sense, part of the land, he had also certain ancient rights and claims over the rest of the land, which he did not fully own. The land which he fully owned was called his demesne. It consisted of the site of the manor house, with its adjacent farm-buildings, garden, and orchard; it also included arable land, sometimes enclosed by hedges, sometimes scattered in open half-acre strips amongst the lands of the village people; and it included also meadow and pasture-lands of various kinds. If the lord were rich it comprised also his deer-park, surrounded by wooden palings, and planted with beech, oak, or elm-trees. This demesne-land the lord could cultivate for the supply of his household, or could turn into pasturage for sheep, or could let out for a money rent to tenant-farmers as he pleased.

Of the rest of the village land the lord was by no means owner in the modern sense; some of it was held of him by freeholders, some by copyholders, some by mere cottagers, and some of it was the common pasture or waste, over which almost every one in the village claimed certain rights.

The freeholders were those who held of the lord land which

* *Sometimes the 17th century village contained two distinct manors with two lords. There were, also, villages in the eastern counties where there was no lord of the manor, and where therefore the villagers were independent freeholders. But the simplest type of village is the one described here.*

passed by undoubted inheritance from father to son, and which could be freely bought and sold. Some of them held as little as an acre or less, and were merely cottagers; others held as much as 120 acres or more, but the freeholder who owned more than 50 or 60 acres was exceptional. The freeholders were supposed by ancient custom to pay the lord of the manor a fixed sum of money or "quit-rent" every year, and to attend the Manor Court. The lord could not alter the amount of the payment, as a modern landlord can increase rent,* nor could he interfere with their lands so long as freeholders paid their annual dues.

The copyholders were another and much larger class. They also paid dues to the lord. Their land was often merely held for life; but in a very large number of cases, like that of the freeholders, it descended from father to son. Their claim to it, however, was far less secure. They were said to hold it by "copy of court roll," for their right to it was based on a copy which they possessed of a statement in the court rolls of the manor; this document showed what dues they owed to the lord. Copyhold was land which in the Middle Ages had belonged to villeins; but whereas in the Middle Ages villeins had been bondsmen tied to the land and unable to leave it without the lord's consent, copyholders were free men and could give up the land, and even sell their rights over it if the lord gave permission. Villeins too had had many degrading conditions to observe, and they had had much hard work to perform. Copyholders were no longer subject to merchet,† or the like, and

* *Rent is used in this chapter in the modern sense, implying a sum of money which a tenant who takes land on lease or other agreement, contracts to pay to his landlord for a year or series of years, in consideration of the amount which he expects to make by use of the land. Such a tenant was in those days the only kind of land-holder who was called a "farmer."*

† *Merchet was the sum of money or "fine" which a villein in the Middle Ages on most manors had to pay his lord when the villein's daughter was married.*

in general, no longer owed dues in labour. They were obliged, however, to pay to the lord, when they inherited or otherwise acquired the land, a considerable sum of money, known as a Fine on Inheritance. They had to pay annual dues in money, and sometimes also payments in kind, such as "rent hens" and corn; sometimes they also had certain slight services to perform on the lord's land, a heritage from the days of villeinage. The custom of the manor was always appealed to in settling the nature and amount of all these payments. The copyholder class was, at the opening of the 17th century, by far the most numerous amongst the husbandmen of England.*

The third type of husbandman to be found in the village was the tenant-farmer, who rented portions of the lord's demesne land. He was the true 'farmer" in the old-English sense of that word. There were as yet relatively few of this class, but the numbers were rapidly growing. Their day was to come in the late 18th century.

Besides these three classes of husbandmen there were cottagers in every 17th century village. These were sometimes landless men, holding merely their house and its garden by one of the three tenures; very often, however, they owned small scraps of arable land. Moreover, whether they held arable land or not, by ancient undisputed custom it was very usual for cottagers as well as husbandmen to share in the immemorial rights of grazing cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and geese on the great common of the manor, and of getting furze and fuel on the waste and woodland. Thus the two marks of the 17th century village were that there was usually one "Squire" of whom all held their land, and that nearly

* *In* 118 *manors of the* 16*th and early* 17*th centuries analysed by Mr. Tawney,* 61 *per cent. of the landholders were copyholders. In the Wiltshire, Devonshire, and Somersetshire manors* 77 *per cent. were copyholders, and in Northumberland* 91 *per cent. On the other hand, in Norfolk and Suffolk, freeholders were in vast preponderance.*

everybody, large and small, had some claims, however vague, on the village land.

Of the three classes of farmers, the most vigorous and independent were the freeholders. During the 16th and 17th centuries, they were becoming, for all practical purposes, absolute owners of their lands; for, owing to the fall in the

FIG. 11.—A well-to-do countryman of the early 17th century with his wife.

(*From John Speed's Atlas*, 1611–12.)

value of money,* the old fixed annual payments to the lord had decreased in actual worth to such an extent that many stewards at length neglected to collect them; and even where they were still collected, their amount was trifling. The actual possession of his land gave dignity and prestige to the freeholder, and this the law recognised. Those freeholders who owned enough land to bring them in yearly a profit of 40*s.* or more, had the parliamentary franchise for the county, which was denied to the copyholders and mere

* *This great change was chiefly due to the fall in the value of gold and silver, owing to the large amount of these commodities which came to Europe in the 16th century from Central and South America.*

tenants. Unlike the other classes of husbandmen, moreover, these "40*s.* freeholders" were liable to serve on juries at Quarter Sessions and Assizes, a tiresome duty, which yet gave them some standing.

A vivid picture of the 17th century freeholder was drawn by Fuller in 1642—

"He wears russet clothes, but makes golden payment, having tin in his buttons and silver in his pocket. . . . In his house he is bountiful both to strangers and poor people. Some hold, when prosperity died, she gave her last groan among the yeomen of Kent. And still at our yeoman's table you shall have as many joints as dishes; no meat disguised with strange sauce; no straggling joint of a sheep in the midst of a pasture of grass, but solid substantial food. He hath a great stroke in the making of a Knight of the Shire.* Good reason, for he makes a whole line in the subsidy book. . . . In his own country he is a main man on juries. . . . In a time of famine he is the Joseph of the country and keeps the poor from starving . . . and to his poor neighbour abateth somewhat of the high price of the market. The neighbour gentry court him for his acquaintance, which either he modestly waveth, or thankfully accepteth, but in no way greedily desireth. In war, though he serveth on foot, he is ever mounted on a high spirit, as being a slave to none, and subject only to his own Prince."

In some districts of England there were already large tenant farmers, but for the most part they were husbandmen on a small scale. Though the tenant farmer sometimes rented his land merely by the year, he often held a lease "for three lives," covering the lifetime of himself and two other people specially named in the agreement; such a lease gave him much of the spirit of the freeholder. His family became attached to a particular farm, and continued to lease it until the break-up of the old village life in the agricultural revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries. Neither freeholders

* "*Knights of the Shire*" *were the county members of parliament. They were elected by freeholders whose lands or tenements were worth at least* 40*s. a year. The* "*subsidy book*" *was the list in each county of the people who paid the tax known as* "*Subsidy*," *which was a tax on the value of a man's property in land or goods. Those whose property was valued at less than* £3 *paid no subsidy, and did not appear in the subsidy book.*

nor tenant farmers claimed to be gentlemen ; as Sir Thomas Smith, writing in Elizabeth's reign, says—

" This sort of people confesse themselves to be no gentlemen, but give the honour to al which be or take upon them to be gentlemen. . . . These be not called masters, for that (as I saide) pertaineth to gentlemen onely. But to their surnames, men adde goodman ; as if the surname be *Luter*, *Finch*, *White*, *Browne*, they are called, goodman *Luter*, goodman *White*, goodman *Finch*, goodman *Browne*, amongst their neighbours."

The class of copyholder was also entering on a period of greater independence at the opening of the 17th century. In the Middle Ages no court but the lord's had protected the rights of copyholders to their land ; and, in spite of manorial custom, throughout the 16th century many lords had claimed the right to exact an unusual and exorbitant fine when a son claimed his father's land. But as early as the 15th century two of the King's Courts, the Court of Chancery, and the Court of Common Pleas, had been willing to try cases between copyholders and their lords ; and in the 17th century lords were no longer allowed by these Courts to exact unreasonable fines. Thus Chief Justice Coke wrote in 1641—

" Now copyholders stand upon a sure ground : now they weigh not their lord's displeasure, they shake not at every sudden blast of wind, they eat, drink, sleep securely . . . let the lord frown, the copyholder cares not, knowing himself safe, and not within any danger."

In this way the position of a " copyholder of inheritance " began to approximate to that of a freeholder.

Whether freeholder, copyholder, or rent-paying tenant, the husbandmen of this period was thrifty and hard-working. A writer of 1614, in speaking of the yeoman, says—

" Though he be master, he says not to his servants ' Go to field,' but ' Let us go ' ; and with his own eye doth both fatten his flock, and set forward all manner of husbandry. He is taught by nature to be contented with a little ; his own fold yields him both food and raiment. . . . He is lord paramount within himself, though he hold by never so mean a tenure."

Hearty, open-handed, and "merry without malice," so that "it would do a man good to be in company with them," as the Elizabethan Harrison writes, these old countrymen were yet unlearned, and often quaintly superstitious. Gervase Markham says that husbandmen should be able to read and write, "howsoever some of our best teachers hold it a thing unnecessary, and rather burdensome than profitable."

Another says—

"He is sufficiently book-read, nay a profound Doctor, if he can search into the diseases of Cattle: and to foretell Rain by tokens makes him a miraculous Astronomer."

If his ox had pain in the belly, he led him to the pond, to gaze at geese or ducks as the surest cure. Still, like his pagan forefathers in Saxon times, he hid the seed-cake in the soil at ploughing-time, half believing that his corn would grow better for this ancient offering. He believed in Robin Goodfellow, in fairies and fairy-rings, in witches, and the evil eye.

Owing to the peace secured by the Tudors, and the consequent growth of internal and external trade, husbandmen of all kinds were prospering three hundred years ago, and were eager to buy more land. John Norden, a land-surveyor, writing in 1607, describes a scene which he had often witnessed in Manor Courts when proclamation was made amongst the assembled villagers that some of the lord's land was to be let or sold. There ensued—

"a kind of madness, as I may call it, but in the best sense it is a kind of ambitious, or rather avaricious emulation, wherein they strive to outstrip another in giving most. . . . Proclamation to that effect has been made in open court, where I have seen, and it is daily in use, that one will outbid another, as at an outcry [= auction] in London, in so much as I have wondered at their emulation. . . . This is not as one Swallow in a Summer, but they are many and everywhere Winter and Summer."

Very often, when land was for sale, the villagers found themselves outbidden by some successful townsman. In 1617

we read that the English " do daily sell their patrimonies, and the buyers are for the most part citizens and vulgar men."

The more substantial husbandmen of the 17th century employed two types of labourer, though the smaller ones employed none. First there were the resident farm-servants, young men and maidens, employed by the year, and paid mainly in board and lodging, and sometimes in certain articles of clothing, with the addition of a small money wage. They were hired at the annual servants' fair, held in some market town, where men and maids, dressed in their best, stood waiting for an employer to bargain with them, and warned each other as to the merits and demerits of those who might wish to engage them. By the statute passed in 1563, and still in force throughout this period, no employer might dismiss his servant and no servant might leave his employer within the year, without going before a Justice of the Peace, and the wages were supposed to be those annually fixed by Quarter Sessions. Thrifty farm-servants saved most of their wages in an old stocking or elsewhere. When older, they hoped to purchase or rent land of their own, for in those days land in small quantities was quite frequently for sale or hire.

The other class of men and women employed by husbandmen was that of the cottagers, who lived in the village, and who worked for the farmer by the day for a money wage; these usually did a little farming on their own account. It was, however, the opinion of Gervase Markham that labourers in husbandry, and even bailiffs, had better not learn either reading, writing, or arithmetic—

" For there is more trust in an honest Score, chalked on a Trencher, than in a cunning written Scroll, how well soever painted on the best Parchment. Writing will help a weak memory; but a weak memory without Writing will soon discover Falsehood. . . . And there is more benefit in simple and single numeration in Chalk, than in double multiplication, though in never so fair a Hand written."

These were the people who handed down the fairy tales of ancient days. From them we derive the lovely folk-songs of our English countryside. They it was who danced the country dances, who kept the May-day festival, and who celebrated Harvest-home with the rites of their pagan forefathers. Of them a foreign visitor to England in James I.'s reign wrote in his diary under September 14—

Fig. 12.—Peasant folk of the early 17th century.

(From a contemporary scrap-book.)

"As we were returning to our inn [at Windsor], we happened to meet some country people celebrating their Harvest-home; their last load of corn they crown with flowers, having besides an image richly dressed, by which perhaps they would signify Ceres; this they keep moving about, while men and women, men and maidservants, riding through the streets in the cart shout as loud as they can till they arrive at the barn."

In spite of the progress and prosperity which marked the farming community in the 17th century, judged by modern standards the old-time village was backward and stagnant in the extreme. The isolation due to difficulties of communication, the lack of education and intercourse, had much to do with it. Still more perhaps was it due to the continued existence in vast tracts of England of the ancient methods of common agriculture, known as the system of the "open-field village." It is reckoned by historians that as late as 1700 three-fifths of the cultivated land of England still lay under this system. An even larger proportion was certainly in

this condition in the year 1600. Indeed, even small market towns very frequently retained this ancient method of cultivating their surrounding fields.

The first distinguishing mark of such villages was that all dwellings lay together along a single street or round a green. The next feature was that all the arable land lay together in three vast tracts, to which alone the word "fields" was applied. Such fields were crossed by the road through the village, and also by cattle-tracks; and the only hedges or fences were those which lay round the whole area of growing crops. Each "field" was subdivided by grassy balks * into oblong patches known in some parts as "flats," in others as "shots," in others, again, as "furlongs." Each flat, shot, or furlong was again subdivided by balks into narrow strips, 40 poles long, and on the average 2 poles wide, half-acre strips in fact; these were often known as "lands." In many cases the lord of the manor had long ago withdrawn his demesne lands from the open fields by exchange, and had enclosed them with hedges. In other cases, the lord's lands were still intermingled with those of the various freeholders, copyholders, and tenants. In the Middle Ages the arable land of any one owner or occupier lay in many widely scattered "lands" over the three open fields, so that a farmer might often walk many miles in visiting his own small holding. But a process of exchange had long been going on, and in many small towns and villages in the 17th century single occupiers held a number of adjoining strips, so that their land lay in larger blocks in the open fields. These fields were still cultivated on the ancient three-field system, whereby in a given year one field grew wheat, or mixed wheat and rye, the next grew barley, oats, beans, or peas, and the third lay fallow.

* *Balks were strips of grass never touched by the plough; they varied in width, according to a statement made in* 1773, *between two and sixteen feet.*

Besides the arable fields, there were one or more large hay meadows, generally by the stream. Usually such meadows were unenclosed, but were subdivided by stones or pegs in the ground into plots of about half an acre in size. Every holder of arable strips had his due proportion of hay-land. Sometimes the meadow plots were annually redistributed by lot. At certain times of the year, after the harvest was cleared on the corn-land or hay on the meadow, both arable-lands and hay-lands were thrown open to the sheep or cows of the strip-holders, until the lands were wanted again.

The third distinguishing mark, which often survived where arable and meadow-land had been enclosed, was the existence of pieces of permanent waste or wild land, often scattered about the village. There were generally, for example, one or more pieces of cow-pasture, which were strictly looked after, the number of animals which each husbandman might send on them being severely "stinted," as the saying went. There was also rough pasture, or waste land, often partly overgrown with gorse, heather, and scrub. Lastly, there was in every open-field village a certain amount of woodland, usually abutting on this waste, over which the villagers had common rights. Here they might feed swine on the acorns and beech-mast; they might gather loose firewood; and though the right of cutting the timber belonged to the lord of the manor, the tenants had generally the right to hew enough to repair their houses, carts, and ploughs, and to make their hurdles and farm implements.

The agriculture of the open-field villages was still in the 17th century usually controlled by arrangements made in the lord's manorial court.* Once or sometimes twice a year the lord's steward summoned the Court. All the

* *In villages where there was no lord, and no lord's court, a village meeting did much the same work as far as the common agriculture was concerned.*

freeholders,* tenant-farmers, copyholders, and cottagers were

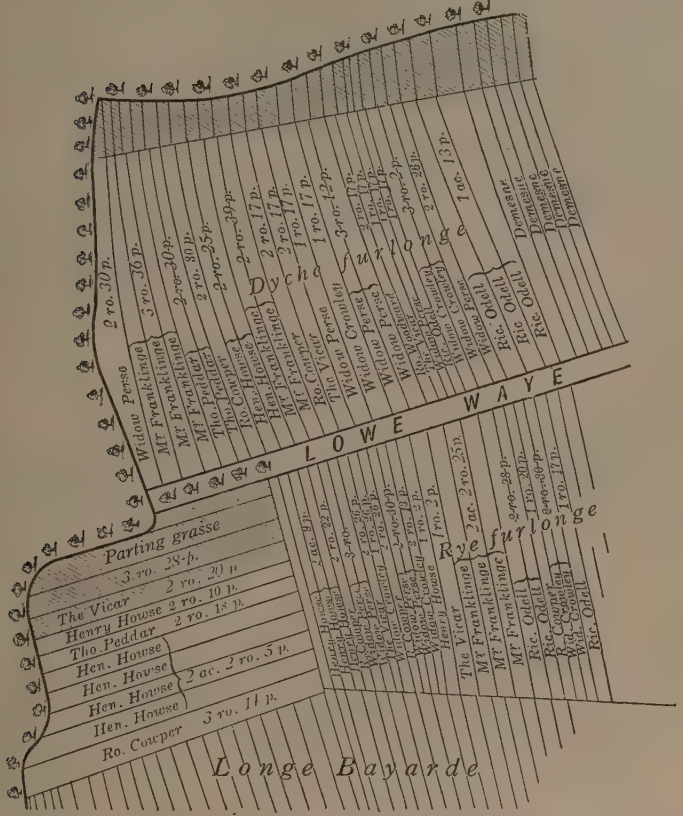


FIG. 13.—A plan of three "furlongs" in the open arable fields of Salford in Bedfordshire in 1590, showing how the tenants were beginning, by exchange, to get their strips together. This was the first step to friendly enclosure. The demesne strips of the lord of the manor were all together. The piece of map shows the first five of them. In this manor Thomas Peddar was the only freeholder besides the Vicar.

supposed to attend. In some villages the Court met in a huge

** In actual practice, on many manors, freeholders were neglectful about attending.*

and ancient barn belonging to the lord, in others in the great hall of the manor house; in others it met in the open-air, on some time-honoured mound, or under some old oak. In those market towns, which were also manors, a similar meeting took place at the market-cross, or in an inn, or in a quaint little building called the Town Hall. One picturesque Manor Court in Essex met as late as 1738 on a hill near the village, before dawn, and those who overslept themselves and did not attend were very heavily fined.

The procedure of the medieval manor courts still survived. When the Court opened the roll of names was read. Those unable to be present sent excuses, and the steward's clerk entered their names on the roll. The sworn homage or jury of neighbours reported offences. Thus in the Court Roll of Gnossall, Staffordshire, for May 7, 1603, we read—

"John Hatton and Francis Payne, cooper, surveyors of pigs there being sworn, present that William Hall hath and keeps three pigs unrung in Gnossall which subvert the land of their neighbours to the great damage of their neighbours. Therefore in mercy of the lord 20*d.** And John Poter of Cowley the same, XII*d.*

"John Astley, tithing man there, being sworn presents that John Poter of Cowley hath driven his beasts on and upon the lord's waste called Coton Wood in Gnossall where he hath not common, to the prejudice of the lord and his tenants. And Agnes wife of John Addams is a common spoiler of her neighbours' hedges. Therefore the aforesaid John is in the lord's mercy.

"The homage present that Richard Barnard jun.: holds in severalty a parcel of land of the lord's waste † in Gnossall, containing by estimation one acre, by him late enclosed without the lord's leave."

Besides reporting offences, the homage made rules for the common farming. For instance, at Great Tew, in Oxfordshire, in April, 1692, they said—

"We do order to keep ten sheep for a yard-land [= 30 acres] for this summer common and no more; the defaulter shall forfeit to the

---

* *This means that he had to pay to the lord of the manor* 20*d.*

† *To hold in severalty was to hold land enclosed by a hedge or fence so that one man only had use of it. Richard had evidently enclosed part of the pasture-land, or waste of the village, which should have been kept as open Common.*

Lord of the Manor 4*d.* for every sheep and 1 penny to the tellers for every default.

"We do order to keep the cow common on the 14th day of May and not before, and all the gaps in Down hedge . . . to be stopped sufficiently, every man his own gaps, by or before the same day.

"We do order to keep one horse for the yardland and no more.

"We do order that no man tie his horse or horses in the corn-field."

The village officers were also appointed at the Court. These varied in different villages. There was often a "foreman of the fields," who took general direction of the arable land. There was the "hayward," who seems to have been in charge of the common or waste; the "pinder," to clap stray animals into the pound; the woodward, the swine-ringer, hog-ringer, or pig-ringer. All these were unpaid. But every village needed one paid servant at least to look after the animals of all the villagers which fed on the common pasture; sometimes he was known as the Common Driver, or the Herdsman, or the Neatherd, or the Swineherd, or the Shepherd. Sometimes the village kept a goose-girl in addition.

A village life such as this, with its demands on good temper and tact, was suited to a stage of development in which men farmed for mere subsistence; for they aimed to lead the life of their fathers and thought but little of accumulating wealth. But as farming developed the wastefulness and the rigidity of the system became apparent. One third of the arable-land lay every year fallow; and much land fit for the plough was used up in grassy balks. The natural fertility of the land was exhausted, because for centuries the same land had been arable, and the same land meadow. Improvements, whether in drainage or in growing fresh crops, were difficult to make, because all must agree to make them; a single strip could not be effectively drained by its owner, nor could it be put under a new crop which ripened at a different season from the old-established corn-crops. Moreover, a lazy husbandman who let weeds grow on his land, sent seeds of thistle, dock, and the like

flying over adjacent strips. Selfish people let their cattle, pigs, and sheep stray over their neighbour's corn. In the common pastures diseases spread rapidly amongst the village flocks and herds.

At the opening of the 17th century the open-field system was by no means universal in England. In the first place, wherever, from about the 14th century onwards, energetic individuals had brought wild land under tillage, either by cutting down forest or by ploughing moorland or grassy hillside, or by draining fenland, each man had surrounded his own land with a hedge or fence, and had cultivated it as he pleased. For example, many of the villages which had sprung up in the later Middle Ages in the Weald of Surrey, Sussex and Kent, in the beech-woods of the Chilterns, in the old forest-lands of Hertfordshire, western Essex, north-west Warwickshire, northern Worcestershire, Staffordshire and Shropshire, and other parts of England,* had never had open fields. In the mountain and moorland districts north of the Humber and Trent, in the mosses of South Lancashire, and far away in the hills of Devon and Cornwall, there were similar villages.

In the second place, many villages which once lay under open fields, had been slowly altering in appearance and character. The wastefulness of the balks had led go-ahead people to exchange strips with their neighbours ; and afterwards, with the lord's consent, they had put hedges round these small blocks of land. This had happened notably in those districts of Suffolk, Essex and Kent, and round the city of Norwich, where because of the woollen manufactures there was a good sale for foodstuffs, or where the coast-trade with London encouraged progress. It had happened

* *See the map, pp.* 46–47.

also in the wool-manufacturing districts of Dorsetshire, Devonshire, Somersetshire, Hampshire, and along the valley of the Severn, in Cheshire, Lancashire and west Yorkshire, and in the coal-mining district round Newcastle-on-Tyne. In short, the open-field villages of the early 17th century still

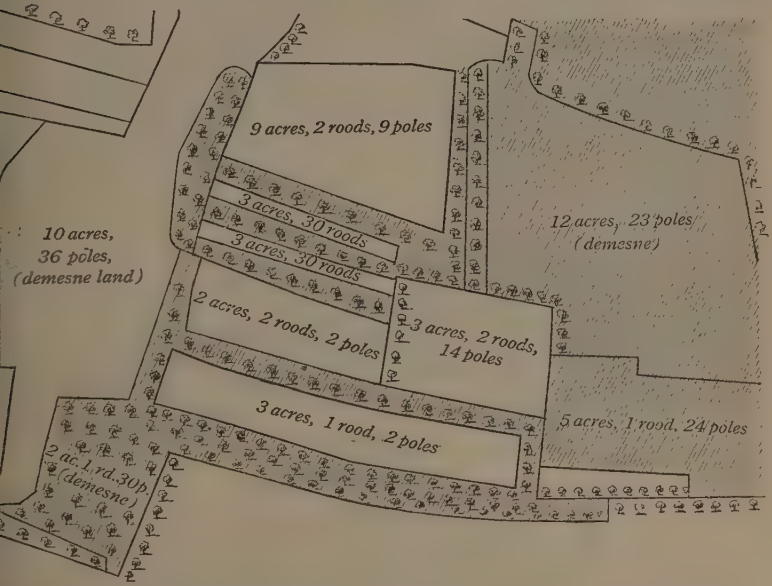
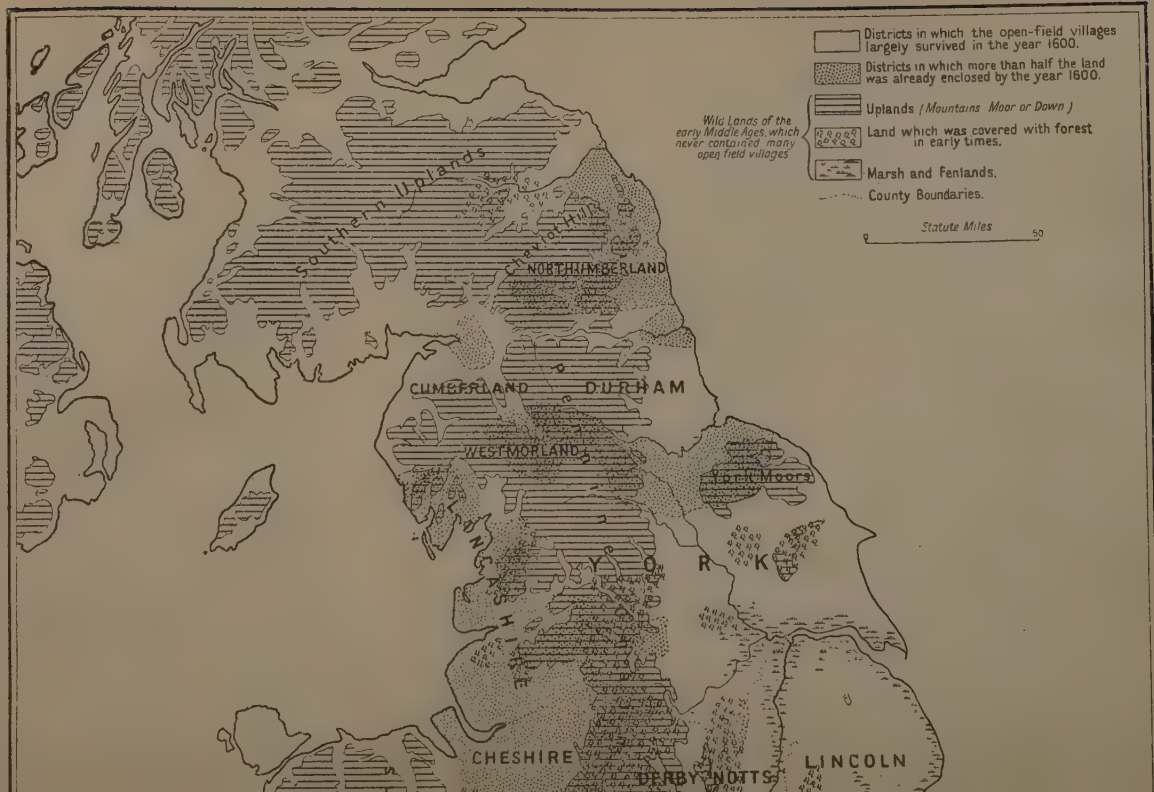

9 acres, 2 roods, 9 poles
10 acres, 36 poles, (demesne land)
3 acres, 30 roods
3 acres, 30 roods
12 acres, 23 poles (demesne)
2 acres, 2 roods, 2 poles
3 acres, 2 roods, 14 poles
3 acres, 1 rood, 2 poles
5 acres, 1 rood, 24 poles
2 ac. 1 rd. 30 p. (demesne)

FIG. 14.—A plan showing some of the small enclosed meadows and ploughlands of the Manor of Edgeware in Middlesex in 1597. This illustrates the way in which the tenants or the lord, having got the strips together, surrounded them with hedges, and sometimes even planted them with trees. This is the second step in friendly enclosure.

survived mainly in a central block of counties from Wiltshire and Berkshire north eastwards to the Norfolk coast, and northwards to the Yorkshire moors.*

Even this midland district was not, in the 17th century, entirely a land of open-field villages. These counties had

* *See the districts left white on the map.*


Districts in which the open-field villages largely survived in the year 1600.
Districts in which more than half the land was already enclosed by the year 1600.
Uplands (Mountains Moor or Down)
Land which was covered with forest in early times.
Marsh and Fenlands.
County Boundaries.
Wild Lands of the early Middle Ages which never contained many open field villages
Statute Miles
50
Southern Uplands
Cheviot Hills
NORTHUMBERLAND
CUMBERLAND
DURHAM
WESTMORLAND
York Moors
YORKSHIRE
CHESHIRE
DERBY
NOTTS
LINCOLN

George Philip & Son, Ltd

The London Geographical Institute.

Map showing the main districts of the open-field villages and enclosed villages of England in the early 17th century.

been during the 15th and 16th centuries the scene of those enclosures of land on a large scale for sheep-farming purposes which had so shocked Sir Thomas More, Bishop Latimer, and others.* This type of enclosure by wealthy men, against the wishes of the villagers, had been opposed by the Tudor sovereigns, and a fresh law against it was passed in 1597. It was discouraged also by the early Stuart kings, for it led to riots, as, for example, in Northamptonshire in 1607, and it drove the thrifty peasantry away from the country-side. In 1607 the king's council sent commissioners to investigate the matter. In 1609 they ordered the judges on circuit to inquire. In 1630 they wrote letters to the Justices of the Peace of certain Midland counties. They summoned the worst culprits before the Star Chamber.

Under the commonwealth we have an earnest petition to parliament sent by the commoners of Wootton Bassett, in Wiltshire, because the lord of the manor, Sir Francis Englefield, had endeavoured to enclose their common pasture. They said—

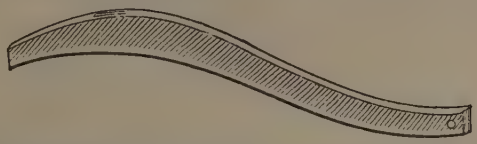
"He . . . did divers times attempt to gain his possession thereof by putting in of divers sorts of cattle, insomuch that at length, when his servants did put in cowes by force into the said common, many times and present upon the putting of them in, the Lord in His mercy did send thunder and lightning from heaven, which did make the cattle of the said Francis Englefield to run so violent out of the said ground that at one time one of the beasts was killed therewith; . . . and as soon as those cattle were gone forth it would presently be very calme and faire, and the cattle of the town would never stir but follow their feeding as at other times."

On the whole it seems clear that the Tudor and early Stuart kings were successful in checking these big enclosures in the Midlands, for even in the 18th century a large amount of the land in these counties was still in open fields.

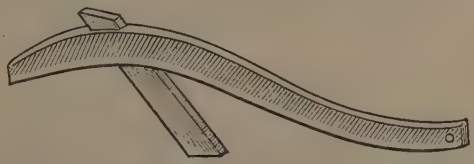
Another handicap to good farming lay in the love of primitive implements and of ancient ways which marked the old-time farmer. The plough of the 17th century, for

* *See Book IV.*

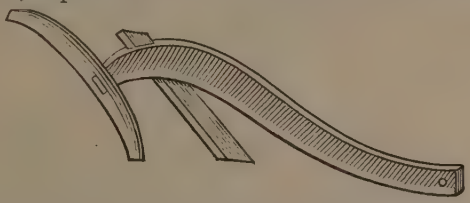
example, was of a type which had been used for hundreds of years. Made of wood, except for the ploughshare and coulter, heavy and unwieldy, it needed four, six, or eight oxen to draw it, and at least two men, one to lead and one to plough.



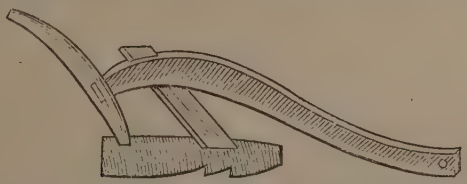
1. "The strongest and most principallest peece of timber belonging to the same is called the Plough-beame, being a large long peece of timber." (Length from 5 to 7 feet.)



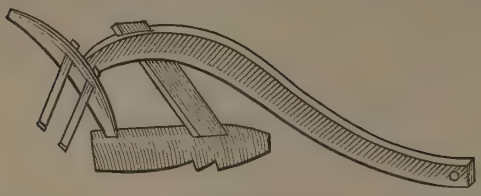
2. "The skeath, a peece of wood of 2½ foote in length, and 8 inches in breadth, and 2 inches in thickness is driven extreamely hard into the Plough-beame, slopewise."



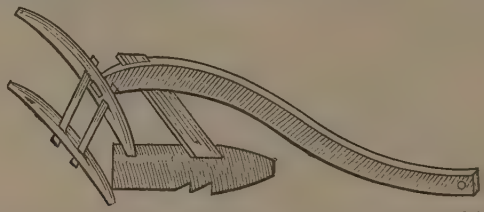
3. "The third part is called the Ploughes principall Hale, and doth belong to the left hand, being a long bent peece of wood, somewhat strong in the midst."



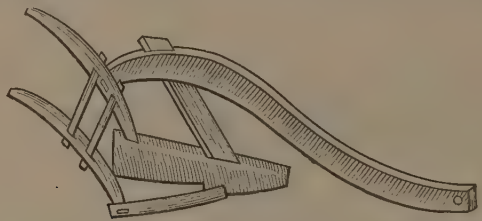
4. "The fourth part is the Plough head, which must be fixed with the Skeath and the Hale all in one instant: it is a flat peece of timber, almost 3 foot in length."



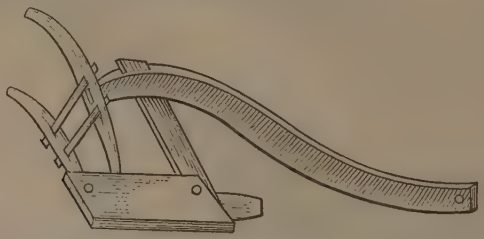
5. "The fifth part is the Plough spindels, which are two small round peeces of wood, which coupleth together the Hales."



6. "The sixth part is the right-hand Hale, through which the other end of the spindels runne, and is much slenderer than the left-hand Hale."

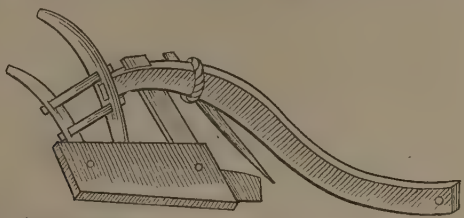


7. "The seaventh part is the Plough-rest, which is a small peece of wood, which is fixt at one end in the further nick of the Plough-head, and the other end to the Ploughs right-hand Hale."

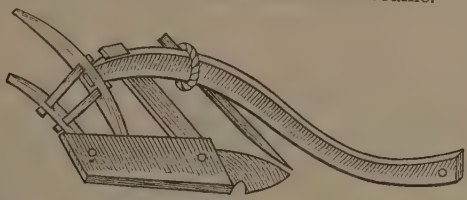


8. "The eight part is called the shelboard, and is a broad board of more than an inche thicknesse, which covereth all the right hand of

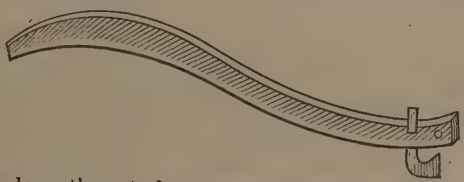
the Plough, and is fastened with two strong Pinnes of woode through the Skeath and the right-hand Hale."



9. "The ninth part is the Coulture which is a long peece of Iron, made sharpe at the neather end, and also sharpe on one side, which passeth by a mortisse-hole through the beame; and to this Coulture belongeth an Iron ring, which windeth about the beame."



10. "The tenth part of a Complete Plough, is the Share, which is fixed to the Plough head, and is that which cutteth and turneth up the earth."



11. "The eleventh part of a perfect Plough is called the Plough-foótt, and is through a mortisse-hole fastened at the farre end of all the Beame with a wedge or two, so as the *Husbandman* may at his discretion get it higher or lower: the use of it is to give the Plough earth or put it from the earth."

FIG. 15.—The parts of a wooden plough of the early 17th century. (*From Gervase Markham, "The English Husbandman,"* 1613.)

Other marks of backward farming were everywhere seen. There was but little drainage of the land; the farmer relied on moles to make channels in the soil. Land was manured only by

folding sheep or driving cattle upon it. Almost all crops were sown broadcast, so that no effective weeding and no hoeing could be done. The usual field-crops were merely wheat, rye, barley, oats, beans and peas. By most people turnips were grown merely as a kitchen garden vegetable, and clover and other root crops were almost unknown. The result was that the land had to be left fallow, at regular three-year intervals, to avoid exhausting it. Moreover, only a few cattle could be kept through the winter. The rest were killed and salted at Martinmas (St. Martin's day, November 11). Those which were saved for milk and for breeding purposes fed miserably the cattle in the cowshed on scanty hay, or pea-straw, the sheep on the Common. The calves and lambs were in consequence stunted, and the full-grown animals small. In 1710 at Smithfield market the average weight of the bullock when killed was 370 lb.; that of the calf, 50 lb.; the sheep, 28 lb.; and the lamb, 18 lb.*

But the greatest obstacle to farming improvements lay in the rooted love of old ways which distinguished the old-time villager. A lord of the manor or his steward who wished tenant farmers to grow outlandish crops, or to enclose their open fields and plant hedges, or otherwise to improve their lands, found them obstinately opposed to all changes. A land surveyor, Edward Lawrance, writing in 1727, described the sort of thing that might happen—

"In treating with tenants, they should be talked to in their own language, and by arguments which they thoroughly understand and have a feeling sense of. . . . This method hath also another good effect; for it put a stop to all further Combinations, and, as it were Rebellions against their Lord, usually carried on in a stupid though a sort of sacred manner. For it is usual with them to assemble together round a great Stone, upon which they are to SPIT, believing this practice (joyned with a Promise of what they will do and stand to) to be as

* *Average modern weights are: bullock, 720 lb.; calf, 112 lb.; sheep 75 lb.; lamb, 35 lb.*

sacred and binding as if they had taken a public oath. In this contrivance I will not suppose that they can prevail upon the Vicar of the place to preach against Improvements: but if they can prevail upon the Clark of the Parish (as sometimes they have done) to set an apposite Psalm, and make the Congregation sneer, they applaud themselves for their Wit, and conclude their business done."

This obstinate conservatism of the yeomen was not their own fault. It was due to the fact that they knew little or nothing of what went on outside their own village, or the neighbourhood of their nearest market town. Even in 1724, when Defoe published his famous "Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain," he speaks of each county as a separate "country," with its own society, and its own farming customs, and he constantly subdivides the counties into distinct and separate districts. Yet Defoe visited the progressive parts of English counties; his interests did not lead him into the remoter market-towns and villages reached only by impassable bye-roads and bridle-paths, where isolation was far more marked.

We may conclude our account of 17th century village life with a description of the life of a working farmer who was also squire of his village. It is drawn from his own account book, and from a manuscript book of advice which he left for his son. Henry Best was the younger son of Mr. Best, lord of the manor of Elmswell, in Yorkshire, and, as usually happened to a son in his position, he was sent from home, and apprenticed to a trade far away in the industrious county of Essex. His father gave him only £100, including his apprenticeship fee; but he prospered, and married a grocer's daughter at Braintree. Thenceforth he seems to have kept a grocer's shop. His elder brother went to college, and became a Master of Arts; but he could not manage his estates. After his father died,

therefore, in 1618, he sold Elmswell to his prosperous younger brother, the grocer, for the sum of £2000. Henry Best, in short, gave up grocery and became a small country squire.

From his account-book we learn that when he left Braintree for Elmswell, he took north with him groceries to the value of £4 5*s.* 10½*d.*, including "Cloves, Synamon, Nuttmeges, Ginger, Pepper, Sugar peeces, White starch, Currans," and many other things. He also took haberdashery, including "Silke, Thridd, Ribbining, Pinnes (3000 for 2*s.* 3*d.*), Packthridd," and so on. He took with him also a great many books, "A greate bible, Mr. Callvin's Catechisms, Mr. Greenwood's tormenting Tophet, Mr. Dikes his misery of selfe deceavinge," and others which show him to have been a good Puritan. He took also several books on "Phisicke."

The village of Elmswell, of which he was now to be squire, lay and still lies, in the flat low-lying plain of south-east Yorkshire, a few miles south of the Wolds. It is about 18 miles, as the crow flies, north of Hull. The manor had belonged in the old days to a monastery near York. In the village, shaded by leafy elm-trees, rose several small springs, which flowing together formed a "beck" or rivulet, running southwards to the river Hull. Here, by the beckside, lay the wide marshy meadows of the village, known by the local name of the "Carre." These meadows were used till mid-July for growing hay, and were divided up amongst the various farmers into "lands" or sections. From time immemorial, after hay-harvest, they had been commonable, but just about this time, by mutual agreement, they were permanently divided and enclosed with hedges, and were henceforth known as "closes." It was found that they were worth three times as much as before.

Beyond the meadows there stretched, unenclosed by hedges, the open arable fields of the village, of about 1000

acres in extent. They were divided into three sections, known as the East Field, the Middle Field, and the West Field. Here the land was divided merely by grassy balks into furlongs, known here as "flats," and subdivided into half-acre or quarter-acre strips known as "lands." But by long process of exchange of strips, the lord of the manor had begun to get his land together in blocks, for we read in reference to barley harvest—

"There is in the demesne flat in the Middle field . . . 16 lands, which served 6 women to rake and cock a whole day and somewhat more; they made of these 16 lands, 4 rows of cocks, raking 4 lands together."

The entries in the account book give us a vivid idea of the inconveniences of growing crops in the open fields—

"June 23rd, 1625, John Edwards' son drove over his kine over the street flat over my oats. Testes [= witnesses] Leonard Fryer, Ralph Lambert." "July, 7th—Henry Slee, Richard Williamson, William Ellerton, Stephen Goule, and James Megson drove John Edwards' mucke coopes [= manure carts] over my flat in the middle field, and over the 6 oxgangs that belonged to Thomas Webster, and over the four oxgangs late in the occupation of William Whitehead, in two or three several places, and after warning given to the contrary they came again by their master's commandment. Testes John Bonwicke and Henry Longbaine."

An oxgang in this manor was probably about $12\frac{1}{2}$ acres, and this passage suggests that the tenants as well as the lord had exchanged many arable strips, and had got their open-field lands into blocks. Again we read, March 29, 1623—

"Agreed with John Lanckton to pay me for the trespass of his father's sheep made in my rye 30*s.* to be paid at Midsummer."

Besides the meadow-land of the carre, and the open arable fields, there were sixteen closes or enclosed fields belonging to the lord of the manor which were used for hay and pasture; and there were five or six others belonging to certain farmers. These, perhaps, lay where there had once been the permanent pasture and waste common to the village.

Henry Best, on arriving at Elmswell with his wife and children, took up his abode in the manor house.* He ordered bricks and hired a builder to build a new house, for we read in his accounts for October, 1634—

"Agreed with John Arluish of Beverley to make and burn me four hundred thousand of brick, well and sufficiently, and I am to pay him for digging, turning, and making, burning the said brick, after the rate of 3*s*. 8*d*. the thousand; I gave him 12*d*. for a godspenny."

The house, which still stands at Elmswell, is built of red brick, and mellow with age. On the sunny south side an ancient pear-tree climbs the house; on the north, where the main entrance lay, is an old garden, once no doubt bright with flowers, and still surrounded by its high brick wall, and by its sheltering yew-trees and shrubs. Looking out of the stone-mullioned windows of the house Henry Best could see beyond the flower garden the orchard, and on the other side of the house the farm-buildings grouped round the farmyard. There were three barns, and a stable, where, beside the horses, one of the servants slept on a wooden bed. There were the usual dove-cot and a peat-stack for winter fuel.

Here Henry Best and his wife settled down to a simple and hard-working life. In the hall, with its carved wooden screen, its three tables, its long settle, its six wooden stools, its clock, and its wide fireplace, they and their farm-servants had their meals. Here, after sheep-shearing, when the dealer from Beverley came to buy the wool, they brought it to be weighed—

"The man that bought it, came and weighed it, packed it up, and paid for it on Thursday the 14th of April, and the next day was it fetched away. There was of it 29 stone, which came to £11 12*s*. It was weighed in the hall, the pack-cloth being laid against the screen; †

* *There is still standing at Elmswell a manor house built just about this time.*

† *An old dining hall was entered from one end, where a high wooden partition, often of carved oak and supporting a minstrel's gallery, separated a narrow entrance passage from the main body of the hall. This partition was called the screen.*

it was weighed all in single stones, because the scale would hold no more but a stone."

Directly he arrived in Elmswell Henry Best hired his farm-labourers. Two were day-labourers. One was John Bonwicke, who rented a cottage and a "close" for £1 6*s.* 8*d.*; he seems to have grown corn on his own account, for in 1618 his wages were £3 a year, and the sowing of 2 bushels of barley. Three months later he was given, in addition, "an old suit." In 1622 his wages were raised—

"John Bonwicke to have £6 in money, 8 bushels of barley, 2 bushels of oats, and a peck of oatmeal, and a frieze coat, and a stook of straw every week from Christmas to Lady Day in Lent."

And, later, the account book notes—

"John Bonwicke, his frieze coat, 6*s.* 8*d.*"

Then there was Simon Hewetson, or Symond Huson (the account book varies the spelling), who was the trusty shepherd to Henry Best. He, too, rented a house and close for 15*s.* a year, but "it is worth more" notes the lord of the manor. He was a small sheep-farmer on his own account, and part of his wages took the form of winter feed for his sheep in the lord's close or fold—

"July, 1618. Symond Huson to have 26*s.* 8*d.* per annum; and the wintering of 9 sheep."

Again—

"1622, Symon Hewetson to have £5 in money and 10 sheep wintered, and the rent of his house and garth * the next year, and I to pay for his cows' cost on the Greets † the next summer."

Besides the day-labourers there were the resident farm-servants whom Henry Best hired, the week after Martinmas at the fair. All farm-servants took a few days' holiday at

* *Garth = yard, garden, or paddock.*

† *This refers to the north-country custom, still not quite extinct, of sending the younger cattle from spring to autumn to some distant pasture on the Wolds, and paying some Wold farmer for their keep. Henry Best invariably sent his young cattle in this way.*

Martinmas, and were then hired again for a year. We read in the Farming Book—

"We kept constantly (at one time) five ploughs going, and milked fourteen kine, wherefore we had always four men, two boys to go with the ox-plough, and two lusty maid-servants. Some servants will at their hiring condition to have an old suit, a pair of breeches, an old hat, or a pair of shoes; and maid-servants to have an apron, smock, or both."

The chief man, or foreman, got £3 10*s.* to £4 a year; maid-servants got 18*s.* to 28*s.*, and boys about 20*s.* to 24*s.* a year. At Martinmas, 1632, we read in the account book—

"Laid out for the swine-herd for a pair of shoes 16*d.*, for two skins for his breeches and thred 1*d.*, lining 11*d.*, and for mending his clothes 3*d.*, and heel hobs 2*d.*" (In 1642) "Christopher Pearson £4 6*s.* and a pair of my boots which are too strait * for me, and a pair of old shoes."

Then there were the extra labourers at harvest time. Some of them were cottagers from the village; they received about 6*d.* a day. Thus, on July 11, 1624—

"To sett[lement] of Leonard Goodall's reckoninge for 11 days work for himself, and 6 days his wife 5*s.* 1*d.* A cheese sold to him 17*d.*, and rye 2 pecks 2*s.* 6*d.*"

But at times of great pressure, extra men and boys were hired from the Yorkshire Moors. They were paid by the week, 3*s.* for mowers, 2*s.* 4*d.* for binders, and they were boarded in the farm. Planks were erected in barns and outhouses to serve as bedsteads, and these were covered with straw, sheets, and old blankets.

There were in the village of Elmswell, besides the lord of the manor, six other farmers, and seven cottagers. All these people rented their land from the lord. There may have been freeholders besides, but no mention of them would be likely to occur in the accounts of the lord of the manor, especially if he had ceased to trouble about their annual dues. The farms were all of moderate size, the largest having about 200 acres of arable land, besides eleven pieces of meadow in

* *Strait = narrow.*

the Carre. Three of the other farms had 96 acres of arable each, one had 72, and one had 48, and all had, in addition, meadow-land in the Carre.

Besides the farmers there were the cottagers: Lawrence Middleton, had a cottage and close for 13*s.* 4*d.*; and Symon Hewson, the shepherd, paid 15*s.* for cottage and close, which were "worth more"; and Thomas Leake, "for house and yard 8*s.*, because he was at cost with building, but it is richly worth 12*s.*" Then Mary Goodale and Richard Miller had a cottage between them: Mary Goodale had two rooms and the orchard for 6*s.*, and Richard Miller one roomstead for 4*s.* Lastly, Thomas Styringe had a house and orchard for 12*s.*, but "should have paid 15*s.* per annum."

Such was the life of the English village in the days when Milton wrote "L'Allegro."

Book List

Author.	Book.	Publisher.
Prothero ..	English Farming Past and Present	*Longmans.*
Curtler, W. H. R.	Short History of English Agriculture	*Clarendon Press.*
Hasbach, W. ..	History of the English Agricultural Labourer	*King & Sons.*
Hone, N. J. ..	The Manor and Manorial Records	*Methuen.*
Tawney, R. H. ..	The Agrarian Problem in the 16th Century	*Longmans.*
Best, Henry ..	Rural Economy in Yorkshire ..	*Surtees Society.*
Shakespeare, W...	Midsummer Night's Dream ..	—
Herrick	Poems	—
Milton, J. ..	L'Allegro	—
Oliver, Basil ..	Old Houses and Village Buildings in E. Anglia	*Batsford.*
Wilson, J. Dover.	Life in Shakespeare's England ..	*Cambridge Press.*

CHAPTER III

VILLAGE LIFE AND THE GENTLEMEN PIONEERS IN FARMING (1660–1760)

THERE were, in the 17th century, three foreign countries where farming was far better practised than in England, viz. France, the Austrian Netherlands,* and Holland. When English peers and gentlemen travelled abroad, therefore, they saw how backward their own country was. In 1644, a Roman Catholic gentleman, Sir Richard Weston by name, fled from England because he had fought for the king. In Flanders he saw turnips, clover, and artificial grasses growing in the fields, and sleek well-fed cattle grazing in the meadows. In 1645 he wrote, for the private use of his sons, a manuscript called "A Discourse of Husbandry used in Brabant and Flanders." † He returned, about 1649, to his old manor house at Sutton, in Surrey, and began to put some of his knowledge into practice. He grew turnips, flax and clover in the fields, no doubt to the great surprise of his neighbours.

Sir Richard Weston affords an example of a new spirit which became more general amongst peers and country gentlemen from the Restoration onwards. The Civil War had ended for ever the ancient power of the Crown; Charles II. and

* *The country which we call Belgium was then the Austrian Netherlands.*

† *This was subsequently published without his permission in* 1650 *by Samuel Hartlib, a Pole, who had settled in England.*

James II. tried to recover it, but failed. Hitherto, the aim of the king and his council had been to regulate corn prices, lest the poor should suffer. From the Restoration onwards power lay more and more with the peers and gentlemen in parliament. The view which they held was that the people of England, as a whole, would be better off if the land could be made to produce far more in corn or cattle than ever before. Tenant farmers would grow prosperous and would be able to pay more rent to their landlords. Gentlemen and yeomen who farmed their own lands would be able to afford better houses, food, and dress. Yet the price of corn and meat would not rise, because so much would be produced that there would be plentiful supplies for all ; England would even be able to export corn to the Continent.

The first step in the new policy was to encourage farmers to grow more corn, by removing the law * which forbade them to export it except when it was cheap. In 1670, by a new Corn Law, it was laid down that corn might be exported, however high the home price might be. Hitherto the export of corn had been occasional only, ceasing entirely when the harvest was bad, and under such circumstances no merchant had been able to establish a regular trade in corn, since he could never be sure from year to year that he would be allowed to export any ; but from 1670 farmers could, with assurance, grow corn for the foreign market. A second feature of the new policy was that parliament now began to shield English farmers from cheap foreign competition, by putting import duties on corn. By the Corn Law of 1670 a duty of 16*s.* a quarter was imposed on foreign wheat, except in years

* *From* 1360 *to* 1663 *a series of Acts of Parliament had restrained the export of corn, and from* 1436 *most of these Acts had stated the prices per quarter of wheat, rye, barley and oats above which no export might take place. This was to prevent high prices and famine. The Act of* 1663, *the last of this kind, placed the limit at* 48*s. a quarter for wheat.*

when the home price rose to the famine level of 53*s.* 4*d.* a quarter.

At first, however, there was some danger that while farmers would grow more corn and thus reduce the price, merchants would not come forward to take the risk of shipping it and selling it abroad. Some further encouragement was therefore needed to merchants. For this reason an additional Corn Law was passed by the first parliament of William and Mary in 1689. By this act, whenever the home price of wheat was below 48*s.* a quarter, government was to pay a bounty of 5*s.* a quarter to any one who would export it. This is a policy on which many would look severely at the present day. Bounties could only be paid by raising fresh taxes, therefore the system meant that the whole country was to be taxed to keep up the price of corn. But it is probable that at the time it did good, not merely to farmers but to consumers also, since it ended by making corn plentiful and cheap. A flourishing corn trade grew up. It was further stimulated by the circumstances of foreign countries. During the 18th century a succession of great European wars had a disastrous effect upon foreign agriculture ; armies trampled down fields of growing corn, and destroyed cattle. England became the Canada of Europe—the great source of its corn supply. In 1722, when Defoe visited Suffolk, he said—

"The country round Ipswich, as are all the counties so near the coast, is applied chiefly to corn, of which a very great quantity is continually shipped off for London ; and sometimes they load corn here for Holland, especially if the market abroad is encouraging."

Afterwards, visiting the Midlands, he came to Bedford on the Great Ouse—

"Here is also a great Corn Market, and great quantities of corn are brought here, and carried down by barges and other boats to Lynn, where it is again shipped and carried by sea to Holland."

When he reached Hull, in Yorkshire, he found the same

trade ; it was the port for those midland counties which lay in the valley of the Trent—

" Their export of corn, as well to London as to Holland and France, exceeds all of the kind that is or can be done at any port in England, London excepted."

The county of Monmouthshire was also specially noted for corn-growing by Defoe.

Similar encouragement was given in the reigns of Charles II. and William III. to the breeding of cattle. In the lowlands of Somersetshire, between Bridgewater and Bristol, Defoe saw great numbers of large, fat oxen grazing ; Romney Marsh, the fenlands of Lincolnshire, and northern Yorkshire were also famous breeding grounds ; while of Cardiganshire he says—

" The whole County of *Cardigan* is so full of Cattle, that 'tis said to be the Nursery, or Breeding-Place for the whole Kingdom of *England*, South by *Trent*."

The encouragement given to good farming by ideas from abroad continued to stir up peers and gentlemen throughout the early 18th century. While the ordinary farmer was placidly following his primitive methods, three pioneers showed what could be done with the land.

The first of these, Jethro Tull, was born in 1674, at the little village of Basildon, in Berkshire, which is perched amongst wooded hills overlooking the Thames valley, near Goring. Here his father owned land. Jethro Tull, like other gentlemen's sons, was educated at Eton and at Oxford ; then he studied law at Gray's Inn, and travelled on the Continent. His life as a farmer began in 1699, when he inherited a farm at Crowmarsh, on the Thames, near Wallingford. Jethro Tull was gifted with the power of observation, and with the adventurous spirit of experiment. He was not

content to grow merely wheat, barley, oats, beans, and peas. He determined to sow the beautiful fodder crop known as sainfoin, and also to grow turnips and potatoes in the fields. He noticed that some of the seed was of better quality than the rest; he therefore sorted and selected it. He observed that broad-cast sowing was wasteful, since some seeds lay too thickly and others too thinly, while some stayed on the surface, and some got buried too deep; he found that the depth at which various seeds should be planted differed very much, and that seed sown at regular intervals and stated depths does far better. For these reasons he invented a drill, drawn by horses, for sowing the seed. His labourers disliked these new-fangled ways. In the year 1709 he moved from Crowmarsh, and took another farm high up on the bare chalk downland, just over the Wiltshire border, in the parish of Shalbourne; it was known as Mount Prosperous. Two years later, obliged to go abroad for his health, he travelled in France; and there he noticed that the French peasants who tilled the vine always ploughed between the rows of plants in order to clear the soil of weeds, to let in air, and to keep the soil below the surface damp. When he came back, in 1714, he introduced the same method in growing wheat, turnips, and potatoes. He divided his land into long narrow strips, each 6 feet wide, with a space between each strip. The seed in every strip was then planted by the drill in rows, 7 to 10 inches apart. When the seed began to appear, he set men and women to hoe up the spaces between the rows; he also invented a horse-hoe to stir the soil in the wider intervals between the strips. He found that the hoeing enabled him to sow crop after crop in succession without leaving the land to lie fallow. Wonderful results followed. Heavier wheat crops appeared than had ever been seen in that county, although he sowed only one-third of the usual

amount of seed. In the year 1731 he wrote a book called "New Horse-hoeing Husbandry," explaining the results of his experiment. But many who read it were indignant rather than interested. He had great trouble with his farm-labourers, and received much abuse for his book. By this time, however, the new farming, which in Jethro Tull's youth had been the hobby of the few, had become the absorbing interest of many of the aristocracy, and of the wealthier gentry. Farming had become the fashionable recreation of the age. Jethro Tull's work was discussed at the Court of George II., and Queen Caroline was one of the subscribers to his book. His home was visited by farming enthusiasts, and when he died, in 1740, at the age of sixty-six, his ideas were being put into practice by men who had more money to spend than he. Jethro Tull was probably the first farmer to bring science to bear on farming. He made use of the microscope, an instrument which had been developed and improved during the 17th century.

The most famous of the followers of Jethro Tull was Charles, the second Viscount Townshend. He was the heir to wide estates round Rainham, in western Norfolk, but he spent the first fifty-four years of his life, not in farming, but in politics. In 1709 he was ambassador at the Hague, and had probably ample opportunity to see the results of Dutch farming methods. In George I.'s reign he was for many years a leading minister of State, but in 1730 he retired from politics and went to live at Rainham. Western Norfolk was at that time an unenclosed and profitless district. The land was light and sandy, and there were great stretches of heath, used for rough sheep pasture and full of rabbit warrens. Here and there it was marshy. The roads were mere tracks, and carts and carriages crossed freely over people's lands, the drivers picking their way where they pleased, much as they

still do in open prairie country in Canada. Such an estate, under old methods, could not be improved. Below the sand, however, there was chalk and also marl. The latter is a combination of clay and lime, which medieval farmers had often used to fertilise sandy soil. Lord Townshend revived this disused practice, by digging for marl and laying it on his lands. He then began to grow not only corn, but turnips and clover. He planted the seeds with a drill, as Jethro Tull had done, and he horse-hoed and hand-hoed between the rows of turnips; the result was that on his poor lands excellent crops began to grow. The turnips and clover enabled him to keep large numbers of cattle and sheep, and these in turn gave him plenty of manure. He now divided his estate into fields, round which he planted quick-set hedges. A good turnpike road was made, along which vehicles were compelled to pass; and in a few years' time travellers looking out from their coaches could see ploughmen with their teams, women and children picking up stones and weeds, well-fed sheep feeding on turnips, and clover or corn waving in the wind where there had once been little but heather, skinny sheep, and rabbits. Besides adopting Jethro Tull's ideas, Lord Townshend added one of his own. He found that by alternating corn with turnips and clover in a certain order he could avoid the necessity of leaving land fallow. The rotation of crops which he introduced was that of turnips one year, barley the next, clover the third year, and wheat the fourth. It is still known as the "Norfolk four-course rotation," and is the basis of the interchange of crops now most widely adopted in Britain, and in many parts of Europe and America. It was copied at the time in Norfolk, where Lord Townshend became famous as "Turnip Townshend." The rents of farms, which in 1730 were only 15*s.* the acre, rose by 1760 in some cases to 150*s.* the acre, and a farm whose rent had been £18 was

taken at £240. Many working farmers grew rich and prosperous.

The improvements of Tull and Townshend affected arable land, and made it possible to produce far more corn from the acre, and thus far more bread for the people. Tull was a country gentleman, and Townshend a peer. But away in the county of Leicester there was born, in 1725, a simple yeoman's son, Robert Bakewell, of Dishley, whose work it was to show how the farmer could make meat plentiful and cheap. Leicestershire was a county of yeoman farmers, with few great landlords. A considerable part of the county had been already enclosed, and the ancient corn-land was suitable for laying down to pasture. Up to Bakewell's time sheep were valued chiefly for their wool; oxen were valued for their size and power to draw farm-carts and ploughs; cows were valued for their milk. It seems to have occurred to no one that by careful breeding the amount of flesh, and therefore the quantity of meat on cattle and sheep, could be increased. Young animals were valued also for the length of limb, which enabled them to pick their way through muddy lanes and over marshy commons. There was strong county feeling about sheep and cattle, each district clinging to some traditional absurdity which it valued. Arthur Young, a writer of the next period, speaking of the conditions which prevailed as late as the year 1771, says—

"Sussex possessed a Breed of Cattle that had not travelled into Kent, and a race of South Down sheep to be met with in no other part of the Island. Herefordshire in like manner boasted a superior Breed of Cattle, and another of Sheep. The North Down Breed of Cattle were confined to an equally original district. Hampshire and Wiltshire bred a race of Sheep which had straggled into a rather larger extent of country. Dorsetshire possessed a valuable breed for a particular purpose, and were rarely found in any other county but their own. Norfolk and Suffolk abounded in a peculiar race which never travelled beyond their old limits. . . . Durham and part of Yorkshire formed the theatre of the Short-horned Breed of Cattle, which afterwards travelled into Lincolnshire. . . . And if

to extend this examination, we reflect on the rules which governed the Breeders in most, perhaps all these districts, we shall find them a tissue of absurdities: the Norfolk flock-master, who considered his breed the best in the world, if he showed a Ram, was sure to point out the length and spiral form of the horn, and the blackness of the face and legs; whereas the Wiltshire Breeder was equally attached to a white face, and a horn which, falling back, formed a semi-circle for the ear to project before it; deemed by his neighbours in Dorsetshire to be erroneous, because the horn should project forward, leaving a space for the ear behind it: and all the three entirely condemned by the South Down Breeder, whose grand object was a speckled face and leg, and no horns at all. . . . But it is curious to observe, that where a greater degree of judgement appears to have been exercised, it was in one material point essentially wrong: I mean in that of estimating the value of animals very much in proportion to the size of their bones; a fine-boned animal always implied size; a great bone was a great merit; and it is astonishing how long and how closely this prejudice stuck to the farming world; it did not give way for a single moment before the time of Bakewell."

About the year 1745, Robert Bakewell began on his own account as a tenant farmer. A true old English John Bull, broad and brawny, his whole interest was absorbed in sheep and oxen and horses. He determined to breed, by careful selection of specimens and proper treatment, animals of finer types. He took a farm of 440 acres and laid most of the arable down under grass. On the arable land he grew clover, grasses and turnips, as well as corn. In his rich meadow-land he kept at one time 60 horses, 400 large sheep, and 150 cattle. In winter he stalled his cattle in sheds, with paved floors raised 6 or 8 inches, and fed them on straw, turnips and hay. He treated his animals with "amazing gentleness." He travelled from county to county to study and select from existing breeds. He succeeded in producing from the Lincolnshire stock a new type of sheep, compact and of small bone and fine flesh, known as the New Leicesters. From the Lancashire cattle he reared a better type of oxen and cow. From the heavy old horse of the Midlands, with a very long back and hairy legs, he reared a splendid type of cart-horse. As his work became known, go-ahead people began to visit

his farm, and endeavoured to purchase his rams for breeding.

He lived till 1795, but for many years few of the neighbouring farmers would take up his ideas.

From the Restoration onwards, the farming pioneers had realised the importance of enclosing the open-field villages. A pamphleteer of 1663, had said—

> "Corn would be nothing the scarcer by inclosures, but rather more plentiful, though a great deal less land were tilled; for then every ingenious husband would only plough that land that he found most fitting for it . . . so as he would, out of one acre, raise more corn than in the common field can be raised by two. . . . The encouragement of inclosure . . . would infinitely conduce to the increase and plenty of this nation, and is a thing very worth the countenance and care of a Parliament."

Encouraged by the new attitude of parliament, men who wished to get their lands enclosed now occasionally adopted a new method. They petitioned parliament for a private Act, applying to their own village, or to a special part of it. Sometimes the Act dealt only with the common pasture and waste, sometimes only with the open arable fields and meadows, but sometimes it dealt with all the land of the village. In the reign of James I. there had been one such "Enclosure Act." Under Charles II. there was one, and in the reign of Anne there were two. Under George I. there were sixteen, and under George II. there were 226. Plainly the practice was growing. But up to 1760 the older practice of enclosure by private agreement was still the rule. The county of Durham was thus enclosed soon after the Restoration, and even in the Midlands the number of open-field villages was slowly dwindling. Not, however, till after 1760 did the great movement for enclosure begin.

Book List

Author.	Book.	Publisher.
Prothero ..	.. English Farming Past and Present	*Longmans.*
Curtler, W. H. R.	Short History of English Agriculture	*Clarendon Press.*
Hasbach, W.	.. History of the English Agricultural Labourer	*King & Sons.*

CHAPTER IV

INTERNAL TRADE (1600–1760)

In the 17th century, as in the Middle Ages, very much of the buying and selling in England was done in small town-markets by people well known to each other. There, on a market-day, were sold the corn, butter, poultry, eggs and bacon, brought in by the little farmers, and the pots and pans, the lace, the rough homespun cloth and other wares made by the craftsmen. Men bought in the local market the produce of their own country-side, heard the news, and then went home again. Each single county contained many market towns, as the figures on the map of inland trade * show. So steadily did most men buy and sell in their own neighbourhood, that as late as 1758 a parliamentary committee reported that in neighbouring towns of a single county the weights and measures differed widely.

In addition to weekly markets, every country-side had numerous little local fairs, where the people of the county exchanged goods. An old "Book of Knowledge," published in 1676, gives 1194 "Principal Fairs" in England and Wales every year, the largest number occurring in the months from June to November, and the smallest number in January.

This long-surviving custom of local trade was due to difficulties of communication. There were only three ways of conveying merchandise—by coast, by river, and by road—

* *See pp.* 74, 75.

and each had its own obstacles and dangers. Yet, even in the Middle Ages, the more adventurous traders were forsaking the local markets, and were taking long journeys along all these main routes. Without their enterprise England would never have developed. It is, therefore, with this wider trade that this chapter deals.

In the 17th century four types of merchandise were thus conveyed: food and fuel for London, whose neighbouring villages could no longer supply enough; raw materials, such as wool for the clothiers, pig-iron for the hardware workers, and timber for the shipbuilders; manufactured goods of many kinds; and, lastly, luxuries such as tobacco, sugar, wine and silk from abroad.

•

Of the three types of trade route perhaps the most dangerous was that of the coast. In the clumsy slow-sailing "barks" and "hoys" of that period the mariner was at the mercy of every squall of wind—

> "Tost like a cork upon the mountain main,
> Up with a whiff and straightway down again."

as John Taylor, the old waterman poet of Charles I.'s reign said. Defoe wrote in 1724—

> "As I went by land from Yarmouth northward, along the shore towards Cromer aforesaid . . . I was surprised to see, in all the way from Winterton that the farmers and country people had scarce a barn or a shed or a stable, nay not the pales of their yards and gardens, not a hogstye, but what was built of old planks, beams, wales, and timbers, etc., the wrecks of ships and ruins of mariners' and merchants' fortunes."

If forced by stress of weather to land, as John Taylor was at Cromer and in Sussex, the mariner might be arrested and flung into gaol as a pirate. Or he might be decoyed ashore by false beacons, and wrecked by seaside people who made a thriving occupation of coast pillage.

With the coming of winter, coast trade was at a standstill. Speaking of the Ipswich coasting trade, Defoe says—

"In Winter time . . . the Coal Trade abates at *London*, the Citizens are generally furnished, their Stores taken in, and the Demand is over; so that the great Ships, the Northern Seas and Coast being also dangerous, the Nights long, and the Voyage hazardous, go to Sea no more, but lie by, the Ships are unrigg'd, the Sails, etc. carry'd ashore, the Top-Masts struck and they ride Moor'd in the River under the advantages and security of sound Ground and a high Woody Shore."

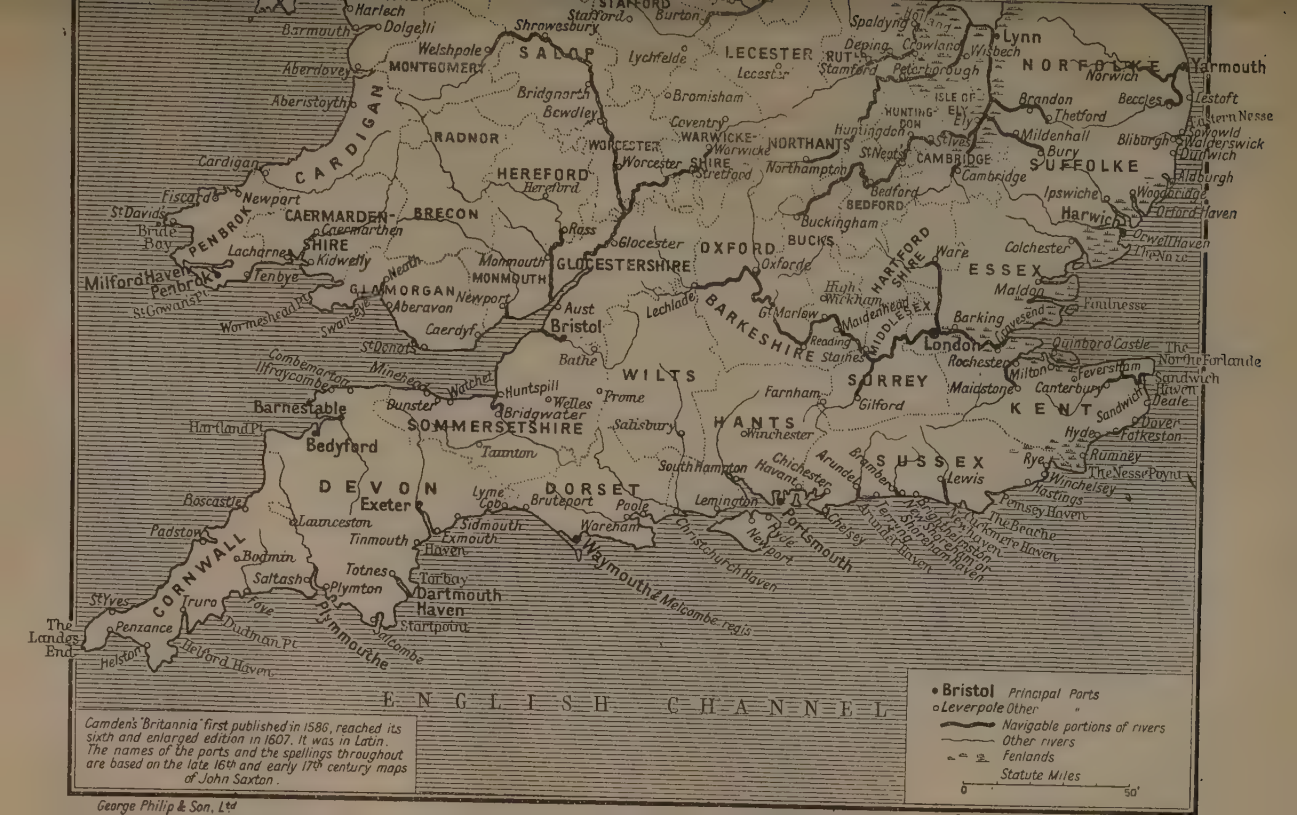
For the small vessels of that time many open havens were available which the larger vessels of the present day cannot use. Our map shows every place on the coast which an old map-maker of Queen Elizabeth's reign entered in his atlas. But the more important ports like London, Hull, Yarmouth, King's Lynn, and Newcastle were placed at the heads of deep estuaries, or even, like York, Exeter, and Bristol, some miles up a navigable river.

Along these coast routes were carried many goods: heavy timber from the forests of Hampshire, Sussex, Kent, and Essex, corn from the eastern counties, butter and bacon from Suffolk, hops, apples and cherries from Kent, coals from Newcastle and Swansea, paving-stones from the Isle of Purbeck, iron, raw wool, and many other things.

Linked with these routes were a few main rivers up which the coast wherries sailed.* Though England is rich in rivers many obstacles then handicapped the trader who would use them. Water-mills, weirs, and traps for catching fish interrupted navigable streams. Ancient bridges with narrow arches restricted the currents. Heavy tolls were demanded by lords of manors with lands along the banks, and there were constant disputes with them as to the right to make paths for towing boats. Gravel and mud, brought down by the current,

* *See the map.*

NUMBER OF MARKET TOWNS IN EACH COUNTY NOTED IN CAMDEN'S "BRITANNIA."
Anglesey 2
Barkeshire 13
Bedford 10
Brecon 3
Bucks 11
Caermardenshire .. 6
Cambridge .. 8
Cardigan 4
Caernaruon .. 5
Ches-shire .. 15
Cornwall 23
Cumberland .. 9
Darbyshire .. 8
Denby 3
Devon 37
Dorset 8
Durham 8
Essex 21
Flint 1
Glamorgan 6
Glocestershire .. 25
Hants 18
Hartfordshire .. 18
Hereford 8
Hunts 6
Kent 26
Lancashire .. 15
Leicester 12
Lyncolne 31
Merioneth 3
Middlesex 6
Monmouth 6
Montgomery .. 6
Norfolke 30
Northants 11
Northumberland .. 5
Notts 8
Oxforde 10
Penbrok 8
Radnor 3
Rutland 2
Salop 14
Sommersetshire .. 27
Stafford 13
Suffolke 28
Surrey 8
Sussex 18
Warwickeshire .. 16
Westmoreland .. 4
Wilts 21
Worcester 10
Yorkeshire .. 45
Barwick
NORTHUMBERLAND
Newcastle
Carlisle
CUMBERLAND
THE Durham BISHOPRICKE OF DURHAM
Hartlepoole
Stockton
Cockermouth
Workington
Egremont
Ravenglas
WESTMORELAND
Kendall
Richmond
Whitbye
Scarborough
I. OF MAN
Dowglas
IRISH SEA
Lancaster
YORKESHIRE
Flamborough Head
Bridlington
NORTH SEA
Yorke
Beverley
Kingston upon Hull
Hedon
Preston
Blackburn
Bradforth
Ledes
Barton
Halifax
Wakefield
Burton
The Spurn Head
Dolton
Rochdale
Doncaster
Grimsby
Liverpole
Manchester
Sheffield
Gaytre
Ganesburgh
ANGLESEY
Holyhead
Warrington
Lyncolne
Aberfraw
Caernarvon
CHES-SHIRE
Chester
DARBY-SHIRE
NOTTS
Newarke
LYNCOLNE
Durham


Harlech
Dolgelli
Barmouth
Welshpoole
MONTGOMER
Aberdovey
Aberistoyth
CARDIGAN
Cardigan
Fiscard
Newport
St Davids
Bride Bay
PENBROK
CAERMARDEN-SHIRE
Caermarthen
Kidwelly
Lacharne
Fenbye
Milford Haven
Penbroke
St Gowans Pt
Wormshead Pt
Swansey
GLAMORGAN
Neath
Aberavon
Newport
Caerdyf
St Donats
Combemartin
Ilfracombe
Minehead
Watchet
Barnestable
Hartland Pt
Bedyford
DEVON
Exeter
Boscastle
Launceston
Padstow
CORNWALL
Bodmin
Saltash
Truro
St Ives
Penzance
The Landes End
Helston
Falmouth Haven
Plymton
Totnes
Tinmouth
Exmouth
Sidmouth
Tarbay
Dartmouth Haven
Startpoint
Torcombe
Plymmouthe
Dudman Pt
Lyme
Cobb
Bruteport
Poole
Warehem
Weymouth
Melcombe Regis
Christchurch Haven
Portsmouth
Ryde
Newport
Chichester
Havant
Lemington
Arundel
Brambers
Shoreham
Lewis
Rye
Hastings
Pensey Haven
The Beache
Rumney
The Nesse Point
Winchelsey
Hithe
Sandwich Haven
Deale
Dover
Folkeston
Hyde
Romney
KENT
Canterbury
Maidstone
Milton
Feversham
Rochester
London
Quinborough Castle
The North Forlande
Gravesend
Barking
Maldon
Foulnesse
Colchester
Harwich
Orford
Orwell Haven
Ipswiche
Woodbridge
Aldeburgh
Dunwich
Walderswick
Sowold
Eastern Nesse
Lestoft
Becles
Yarmouth
Norwich
NORFOLKE
Lynn
Wisbech
Deping
Crowland
Spalding
Stamford
Peterborough
RUTLAND
Leicester
LECESTER
Lychfelde
Burton
Stafford
Shrowesbury
SALOP
Bridgnorth
Bewdley
Bromisham
Coventry
WARWICKE-SHIRE
Warwicke
Worcester
WORCESTER-SHIRE
Stretford
RADNOR
HEREFORD
Hereford
Ross
Glocester
GLOCESTERSHIRE
Monmouth
MONMOUTH
Aust
Bristol
Bathe
WILTS
Huntspill
Welles
Bridgwater
Bunster
SOMMERSETSHIRE
Taunton
Prome
Salisbury
Farnham
Gilford
HANTS
Winchester
South Hampton
Andover
Reading
Staines
Lechlade
OXFORD
Oxforde
BARKESHIRE
BUCKS
Buckingham
Wickham
Marlow
Maidenhead
MIDDLESEX
HARTFORD-SHIRE
Ware
SURREY
ESSEX
Bedford
BEDFORD
Northampton
NORTHANTS
Huntingdon
HUNTING-DON
Ely
Isle of Ely
CAMBRIDGE
Cambridge
Brandon
Thetford
Mildenhall
Bury
Bliburgh
SUFFOLKE
Stowe
Coventry
Lichfelde
Leicester
Deping
Stamford
Peterborough
Crowland
Spalding
Wisbech
Lynn
Norwich
Yarmouth
Becles
Lestoft
Eastern Nesse
Sowold
Walderswick
Dunwich
Bliburgh
Aldeburgh
Woodbridge
Ipswiche
Harwich
Orford
Orwell Haven
Colchester
The Naze
Foulnesse
Maldon
Barking
Gravesend
Quinborough Castle
The North Forlande
Sandwich Haven
Deale
Dover
Folkeston
Hyde
Romney
Rye
The Nesse Point
Winchelsey
Hithe
Hastings
Pensey Haven
The Beache
Rumney
Shoreham
Arundel
Brambers
Chichester
Havant
Lewis
Chelsey
Portsmouth
Ryde
Newport
Lemington
Christchurch Haven
Poole
Bruteport
Lyme
Cobb
Warehem
Weymouth
Melcombe Regis
Torcombe
Startpoint
Dartmouth Haven
Tarbay
Totnes
Plymton
Plymmouthe
Dudman Pt
Falmouth Haven
Helston
Penzance
St Ives
Truro
Saltash
Bodmin
Padstow
Launceston
Boscastle
Exeter
Tinmouth
Exmouth
Sidmouth
Haven
Hartland Pt
Barnestable
Bedyford
Combemartin
Ilfracombe
Minehead
Watchet
Huntspill
Welles
Bridgwater
Bunster
Prome
Salisbury
Taunton
Bathe
Aust
Bristol
Glocester
Ross
Monmouth
Caerdyf
Aberavon
Newport
Neath
Swansey
Wormshead Pt
St Gowans Pt
Milford Haven
Penbroke
Lacharne
Fenbye
Kidwelly
Caermarthen
Bride Bay
St Davids
Fiscard
Newport
Cardigan
Aberistoyth
Aberdovey
Barmouth
Dolgelli
Harlech
Welshpoole
Bridgnorth
Bewdley
Bromisham
Lichfelde
Shrowesbury
Stafford
Burton

blocked many streams, and though in 1618 there was invented "a water plough for the taking upp of sand, gravele, shelves or bankes out of the river Thames and other bankes, harbours, rivers or waters," it was probably never used, for many important rivers, such as the Salisbury Avon, the Welland and Nen, the Itchen, in Hampshire, and the Dee, at Chester, were steadily silting up. In Yorkshire the navigation of the Ouse went no further than York, though in the 13th century it had been open to Boroughbridge. The Aire which, with its tributary the Calder, should have benefited the clothiers of Leeds, Halifax, Huddersfield, Bradford, and Wakefield was, till the end of the 17th century, navigable only for a few miles, and pack-horses had to bring the cloth 16 miles from Leeds and 30 miles from Halifax, and 40 miles over the hills from Rochdale. The Wakefield people complained to parliament that—

> "They are forced to stay two months sometimes while the roads are passable to market, and many times the goods receive considerable damage through the badness of the roads by overturning."

The Don was not passable above Doncaster, and though Sheffield lay higher up the river, the knives of all that countryside had to be sent by pack-horse 23 miles to Doncaster, or nearly as far to the important little river port of Bawtry on the Idle, and so down the Trent.*

The most important river routes were those of the Thames, Severn, Trent, and Great Ouse. The Thames was navigable after 1624 right up to Lechlade; its tributary, the Wey, was navigable to Guildford, and the Lea to Hertford. From Oxford came down cheeses and corn, brought by pack-horse from Warwickshire; from Reading came bales of cloth from the west, and

* *Bawtry was where the great road from London to Berwick crossed the river Idle. The Elizabethan map-maker Saxton marks the Idle as flowing north-east through the undrained marshes of the Isle of Axholme, and joining the Trent by a more direct route than at present. Cf. the map.*

timber from the Berkshire forests; from the great markets of Farnham, in Surrey, and High Wycombe, in Bucks, came corn, meal, and malt. All along the river, at Great Marlow (the port for High Wycombe), at Maidenhead, Staines, Chertsey, Kingston, the little market towns added to the laden barges till they reached the Bull Wharfe, near Queenhithe, above London Bridge. On their return journey they took back raw wool from the London market for the south-western clothiers, "sea-coles" from Newcastle, and spices, sugar, tobacco and other luxuries which came from the Indies.

The Severn was a great inland trade route for the whole of the west, for it was considered safer than the coast journey by "that violent and turbulent Sea called St. George his Channel." To Shrewsbury and so down stream came corn, woollens, and Welsh flannels. To Bridgnorth came pack-horses with cheeses from Cheshire, or with crates of coarse pottery from Staffordshire, or with bales of fustians from the clothing towns of Lancashire. Along the tributary Avon, which was navigable above Stratford nearly to Warwick, came the nails, bolts, keys, and chains from the small hardware villages round Birmingham. Bristol was the seaport to which all these things went. Up stream on the return journey, went sugar, tobacco, and other foreign produce from Bristol, and pig-iron from the Forest of Dean.

The Trent had been a highway in the time of the Romans, and the canal called the Fossdyke, which they had cut from Torksey above Gainsborough to the Witham at Lincoln, was still occasionally used. The highest river port of the Trent was Burton, a great centre on which pack-horse trains converged from the Midlands. "Ships of good Burthen" went up to Gainsborough, while the principal seaport was Hull.

The trade of the Great Ouse was centred at King's Lynn. A writer of 1725 says—

"The Port of Lyn supplies Six Counties wholly, and Three in Part by means of the Great Ouse and the many other Rivers that branch out of it. Upon these Streams stand the large populous Towns—Buckingham, Bedford, Huntingdon, Ely, Northampton, Peterborough, Brandon, Thetford, Bury St. Edmunds, Cambridge: All which depend chiefly on the Navigation; and all which the Merchants at Lyn supply with Maritime Commodities."

Yet the Ouse navigation, with that of its sister streams Nen and Welland, was decaying. Weeds, gravel, and mud were choking up the waterway. The lower stretches ran through undrained fenland. There was often no through channel down the Welland below Spalding, and the Great Ouse itself was liable in winter to become one vast flood, so that navigation ceased entirely.

Of the remaining rivers the Witham was navigable to Lincoln, the Yare and Waveney to Norwich and Beccles, the Kentish Stour to Canterbury, and the Medway to Maidstone.* In Sussex the Avon was open to Lewes, and the Arun to Arundel. The Wye was navigable to Monmouth and Ross, and the Mersey up to Warrington. In 1699 the Aire was made navigable to Leeds, and the Calder to Wakefield, while the Don was opened up in 1739 to within 2 miles of Sheffield. The Soar was made open to Leicester, and the Derwent to Derby, while in 1720 the Mersey and Irwell were made navigable to Manchester.

The carriage of goods by road had its own special difficulties: Modern roads are hard artificial ways, constructed by skilled men under the direction of road engineers; they are usually marked off from the open land on either side by hedges or other boundaries, and they are carefully drained. The roads of old times were for the most part natural tracks across mother earth, for since the close of the Roman occupation

* *See the description of Maidstone, p.* 174.

the art of road engineering had been forgotten. Each parish repaired its own roads as the surveyor for the year thought best.* The usual practice was to make down the centre a track of rough stones, cobbles, gravel, or other local material, and to leave the soft earth at the sides.† Except where open-field villages had been enclosed there were no hedges, and drivers and drovers alike, when dissatisfied with the roadway, made tracks across cornfields and commons as they pleased. In winter, when undredged rivers poured floods over the countryside, many roads became impassable, and after heavy rains lives were often lost by the sudden rising of small streams. Wherever the subsoil was clay there were sloughs of mud along the trackway in which men and beasts might plunge headlong, a fate which befell the pilgrim at the beginning of his journey in John Bunyan's famous story. In 1724, Defoe, writing of the Weald of Sussex, says—

"The Country indeed remains in the utmost Distress for want of good Roads: so also all over the *Wild of Kent* and *Sussex* it is the same, where the Corn is cheap at the Barn, because it cannot be carry'd out; and dear at the Market, because it cannot be brought in."

Most of the roads were purely for local use. But for wider travel certain main highways had long been recognised, branching out from London. Of these there were in the early 17th century no clear maps, and the miles were inaccurately reckoned and marked. In 1675, however, for the assistance of traders and travellers, John Ogilby, map-maker to Charles II., published a wonderful book of the principal roadways of England and Wales. He had ridden on horseback along them, accompanied by a man trundling a wheel

* *See Chap. IX., p.* 182.

† *Amongst the rocky hills and dales of the north, where no wheeled vehicle ever went, and all goods were carried by pack-horse train, a single line of rough flag-stones bedded in the surface soil of moor and valley, marked the centre of the trackway. In unfrequented districts these old pack-horse roads can still be traced following what are now mere footpaths, while the engineered road takes a different route.*

which measured the road in miles. Ogilby had thus made a long ribbon-like plan of every principal road, and had measured the miles from the Standard in Cornhill. He marked out thirty-three direct roads from London "to some Eminent City, Town, Port, or Promontary," fourteen of which actually started from London, while nineteen branched from them further on. He marked also fifty-two cross-roads between cities and towns of importance. All these our map * shows. He found the popular reckonings so incorrect that whereas in some places the standard mile was used, in others the so-called mile was only two-thirds or three-quarters of that length, and "about London the very Roman miles seem to be retained." This book became famous. It was copied and modified in smaller editions suitable to the bulky pockets of travellers, and was the first of many similar road guides.

FIG. 16.—John Ogilby with his man measuring out the roads. The man has a cyclometer on the handle of the wheel, and John Ogilby appears to hold a compass. (The cherub in front was put in for decorative purposes. It holds a foot rule.)

(*From John Ogilby's "Itinerarium Angliæ,"* 1675.)

Along the roads, in spring and summer, the traders of the 17th century drove strings of pack-horses, twelve or fourteen in line, each beast laden with panniers, crates, or bales, to the weight of half a ton. After the Restoration, as trade expanded, the number and size of the pack-horse trains increased. Some

* *See the end of the volume.*

drivers had teams of thirty or forty, the leading horse in each team carrying a bell. Each "train" followed a definite route, and departed and reached its destination at a fixed time. These were the goods trains of those days. To and from London,

FIG. 17.—17th century pack-horses.
(*From David Loggan's "Cantabrigia Illustrata,"* 1690.)

also from the surrounding counties, carriers with two-wheeled carts came and went, and put up at fixed hostelries, where traders could find them. Heavy four-wheeled waggons for merchandise, with covered tops, rumbled from stage to

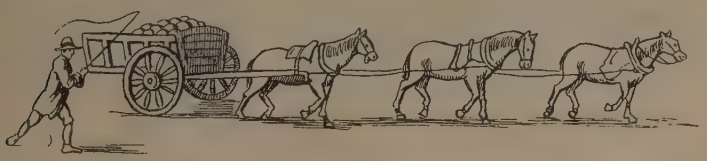


FIG. 18.—17th century carrier with two-wheeled cart.
(*From David Loggan,* op. cit.)

stage along the roads, the drivers walking at their sides; in these rode also those poorer travellers who could not afford to ride, or to drive in the stage coach or the post-chaise.*

* *The four-wheeled "stage-waggon" came in in Queen Elizabeth's reign, and went from one regular stopping place to another, each journey being known as a "stage." In* 1659, *also, the first "stage-coaches" began to run, and carried the second-class passengers of the period. During the* 17*th century, also, a regular system of government "posts" grew up; these were special halting places at inns, the keepers of which were obliged to provide at a fixed rate fresh post-horses for the riders (or post-boys) who carried the mails, and for travellers who were rich enough to hire "post-chaises." The word "post" is derived from the Latin "positus" = placed. It meant originally a man placed with a horse at a certain point and ready to ride.*

The increase in this wheeled traffic, as trade developed, made the roads worse by adding enormous ruts to the miry surface. In Charles II.'s reign a law was passed which forbade any waggon drawing goods for hire to go upon a public way "with above seven Beasts, whereof six shall draw in Pairs, nor with above eight Oxen, or six Oxen

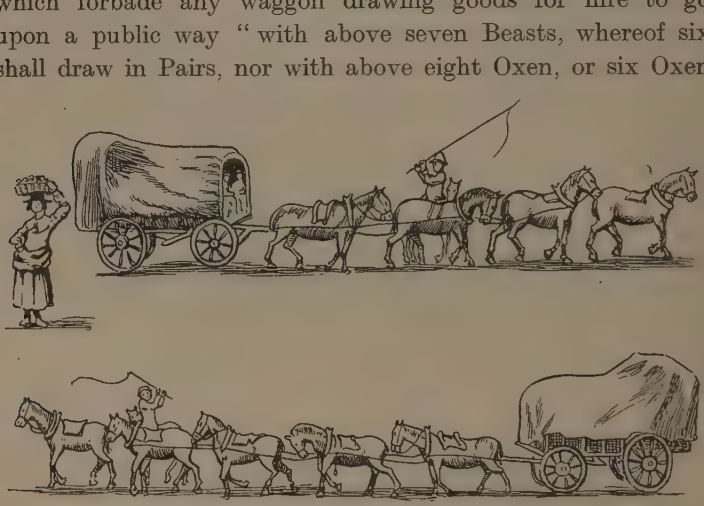


FIG. 19.—17th century four-wheeled waggons.
(*From David Loggan*, op. cit.)

and two Horses." The roads were also used by herds of cattle for the London market which came up before the October rains began, and were sent to feed on the Essex marshes. Even fish sometimes came up on fast horses from the coast, and turkeys and geese came up each year from Norfolk and Suffolk, as Defoe says—

"They have counted 300 Droves of Turkeys . . . pass in one Season over Stratford Bridge on the River Stour, which parts Suffolk from Essex, about 6 miles from Colchester on the Road from Ipswich to London. These Droves, as they say, generally contain from 300 to 1000 each Drove . . . and yet this is one of the least Passages, the Numbers which travel by New Market-Heath, and the open Country and the Forest, and also the numbers that come by Sudbury and Clare being many more. . . . They have within these few Years found it practicable to make the Geese travel on Foot too . . . of

whom 'tis very frequent now to meet Droves, with a Thousand, sometimes Two Thousand in a Drove. They begin to drive them generally in August, by which time the Harvest is almost over, and the Geese may feed in the Stubble as they go."

The goods which thus travelled over the kingdom were bought by the traders in various ways, sometimes in special markets, sometimes at the great fairs, sometimes by travelling chapmen. Woollen goods of various kinds were generally taken by the clothiers who manufactured them to weekly cloth-markets, like those of Exeter, Bradford, Halifax, and Leeds, where they were purchased by inland traders or by merchants engaged in overseas trade. Defoe has given a good example in his picture of the market at Leeds, which was held in the open street of the little town, and to which each small clothier brought his bale of cloth—

"The Street is a large, broad, fair, and well-built Street, beginning, as I have said, at the Bridge and ascending gently to the North. Early in the morning there are Tressels placed in two Rows in the Street, sometimes two Rows on a Side, but always one Row at least; then there are Boards laid across those Tressels so that the Boards lie like long Counters on either Side, from one End of the Street to the Other. The Clothiers come early in the morning with their Cloth; and as few Clothiers bring more than one Piece, the Market being so frequent, they go into the Inns and Publick-Houses with it and there set it down. At seven a Clock on the morning, the Clothiers being supposed to be all come by that time . . . the Market Bell rings; it would surprise a Stranger to see in how few Minutes, without hurry or noise and not the least disorder, the whole Market is filled; all the Boards upon the Tressels are covered with Cloth, close to one another, as the Pieces can lie long ways by one another, and behind every Piece of Cloth the Clothier standing to sell it: . . . . . As soon as the Bell has done ringing, the Merchants and Factors and Buyers of all sorts come down, and coming along the spaces between the Rows of Boards they walk up and down the Rows as their Occasions direct. Some of them have their foreign Letters and Orders, with Patterns sealed on them in Rows in their hands; and with those they match Colours, holding them to the Cloths as they think they agree to. . . . The Merchants and Buyers generally walk down and up twice on each Side of the Rows, and in little more than an Hour all the Business is done. . . . Thus you see, Ten or Twenty thousand Pounds value in Cloth and sometimes much more, bought and sold in little more than an Hour."

Much of the cloth manufactured at this period, however, instead of going to some local market, was sent direct to Blackwell Hall, in London, the greatest cloth-market in the kingdom.

Certain great annual fairs were important centres of trade; these had survived from the Middle Ages, for example, at Boston, Lynn, Gainsborough, Beverley, Chester, Bristol, and, above all, on the great open Sturbridge field at Cambridge. The latter was held from mid-August to mid-September, and is thus described by Defoe—

"It is kept in a large Corn-field, near Casterton [Chesterton] extending from the Side of the River Cam, towards the Road [from Cambridge to Newmarket] for about half a Mile Square. . . . The Shops are placed in Rows like Streets, whereof one is called *Cheapside;* and here, as in several other Streets, are all sorts of Trades, who sell by Retale, and who come principally from *London* with their Goods; scarce any Trades are omitted, Goldsmiths, Toyshops, Brasiers, Turners, Milleners, Haberdashers, Hatters, Mercers, Drapers, Pewterers, China-Warehouses, and in a word all Trades that can be named in *London;* with Coffee-Houses, Taverns, Brandy-Shops, and Eating-Houses, innumerable, and all in Tents and Booths, as above. . . . This great Street reaches from the Road, which as I said goes from *Cambridge* to *New-Market*, turning short out of it to the Right towards the River, and holds in a Line near half a mile quite down to the River-side: In another Street parallel with the Road, are like Rows of Booths, but larger, and more intermingled with Wholesale Dealers, and one Side, passing out of this last Street to the Left Hand, is a formal great Square, form'd by the largest Booths built in that Form and which they call the *Duddery*. . . . The Area of this Square is about 80 to 100 Yards, where the Dealers have room before every Booth to take down and open their Packs, and to bring in Waggons to load and unload. This Place is separated, and Peculiar to the Wholesale Dealers in the Woollen Manufacture. Here the Booths, or Tents, are of a vast Extent, have different Apartments, and the Quantities of Goods they bring are so Great, that the Insides of them look like another *Blackwell Hall*, being as vast Warehouses pil'd up with Goods to the Top. In this *Duddery*, as I have been inform'd, there have been sold One Hundred Thousand Pounds worth of Woollen Manufactures in less than a Week's time, besides the prodigious Trade carry'd on here, by Wholesale Men, from London, and all Parts of England, who transact their Business wholly in their Pocket-Books, and meeting their Chapmen from all Parts, make up their Accounts, receive Money chiefly in Bills, and take Orders. These they say exceed by far the Sales of Goods actually brought to the Fair, and deliver'd in Kind. . . . Here are Clothiers from *Halifax*, *Leeds*, *Wakefield*, and *Huthersfield* in

Yorkshire, and from *Rochdale*, *Bury*, etc. in *Lancashire*, with vast Quantities of Yorkshire Cloths, Kerseyes, Pennistons, Cottons, etc. and with all sorts of *Manchester* Ware, Fustians, and things made of Cotton Wool; * of which the Quantity is so great that they told me there were near a Thousand Horse-Packs of such Goods from that side of the Country, and these took up a side and half of the *Duddery* at least. . . . In the *Duddery* I saw one Ware-house or Booth with six Apartments in it, all belonging to a Dealer in *Norwich* Stuffs only. . . . Western Goods had their Share here also . . . from *Exeter*, *Taunton*, *Bristol*, and other Parts West, and some from *London* also. But all this is still outdone, at least in show, by two Articles, which are the peculiars of this Fair, and do not begin till the other Part of the Fair, *that is to say for the Woollen Manufacture*, begins to draw to a Close; these are the WOOLL and the HOPS. . . . I must not omit here also to mention, that the River *Grant*, or *Cam*, which runs close by the N.W. side of the Fair in its way from *Cambridge* to *Ely*, is Navigable, and that by this means, all heavy Goods are brought even to the Fair-Field, by Water Carriage from *London* and other Parts; first to the Port of *Lynn* and then in Barges up the *Ouse*, from the *Ouse* into the *Cam*, and so, as I say to the very edge of the Fair."

Two kinds of trader, besides the overseas merchants, bought in these special markets and great fairs, the wholesale traders or warehousemen who lived in the big towns, and the chapmen or dealers who travelled about the country with pack-horses or waggons.

A trader of those days lived over his counting-house and shop; his goods were stored in the warehouse on the top floor, and were lifted to and from it by a projecting street crane. The ground-floor room, panelled with wood, had a shop window of small, oblong panes of glass, and a great wooden counter. Here the London trader received the merchants and travelling dealers who came to order his goods. In the counting-house behind, he wrote letters to his "correspondents" among warehousemen in other towns, who bought goods for him and forwarded them by pack-horse team, or waggon-carriage, or coast-wherry. Sometimes he ordered direct from a small manufacturer. Defoe pictures a case in which a London

* *Cotton wool means the raw cotton before it is spun or woven.*

warehouseman has received an order from a merchant for fifty pieces of drugget to be made to pattern. He at once writes off to Mr. H. G., a clothier of Devizes, in Wilts, and asks him if he can supply the wares by a given date—

"The diligent Clothier applies immediately to the Work, sorts and dyes his Wool, mixes his Colours to the Patterns, puts the Wool to the

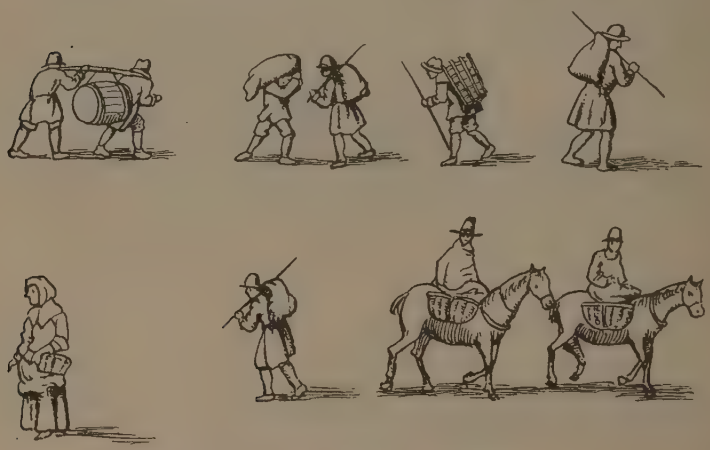


FIG. 20.—17th century road scenes.
(*From David Loggan's "Cantabrigia Illustrata,"* 1690.)

Spinners, sends his Yarn to the Weavers, has the Pieces brought Home, then has them to the thicking or fulling Mill, dresses them in his own Warehouse, and sends them up punctually by the Time."

A warehouseman always had apprentices who paid him a considerable fee, and who lived in his family for seven years; for the first four years they were taught to weigh and measure, to make up bales, trusses, and packs of goods, to attend dutifully in the warehouse and at the counter, to obey their master, and to sweep the warehouse. In the fifth or sixth year the oldest apprentice was taken into the counting-house and learned to make up bills, to write business letters, to judge

the qualities of goods, and become acquainted also with his master's chapmen and other country customers.

The chapman or travelling dealer bought his goods from the warehousemen or at markets and fairs, and rode about England from town to town with a team of pack-horses, selling and buying. Arrived in a town he put up at some inn, opened his packs and sold to retail shopkeepers. What was left he deposited with the innkeeper, who disposed of it later for him. With the cash in his saddle-bow he rode on to collect fresh wares. From the innkeeper the little pedlar might buy the goods, which he in his turn carried to outlying villages and farms.

In the first half of the 18th century internal trade, in spite of all difficulties, steadily grew in volume. More goods were needed for export; more raw materials, more food for the workers, more luxuries for the wealthy must pass about the kingdom, as foreign trade and home manufactures developed. Three improvements were assisting the process. Banks were already growing up; turnpike roads were beginning to be made; posts were being developed.

Banks help traders in three ways. They enable them to deposit their money in safety; they enable them to pay by means of bank-notes, cheques, and other forms of paper; and they enable them to extend their businesses by borrowing capital at reasonable interest. In the early 17th century, before banks grew up, traders often kept money hidden in secret cupboards, boxes, and drawers, and throughout the century they travelled with it hidden in their saddles; they were frequently robbed. Few people borrowed money, since to lend in return for interest was still held wrong by many people. In 1571, it is true, parliament had allowed people

to take what was then considered the very low rate of 10 per cent. interest, but there were as yet no English banks * in which to deposit money, and from which to borrow freely.

In the time of the great Civil War, however, the rich goldsmiths of London, whose business was at a standstill, because nobody was buying jewels or plate, began to offer to tradesmen, merchants, and country gentlemen, to keep their valuables in safety for them. Merchants and tradesmen wanted a place in which to deposit their cash, lest their servants and apprentices, who were enlisting for the army, should go off with it. Royalist gentlemen, obliged to go abroad, wanted some one to whom their stewards could safely pay in the rents from their lands, and needed also somewhere to leave their gold and silver plate. The goldsmiths took these deposits and gave receipts for them ; and because they had got all this hoarded wealth they were able to lend money. They lent to merchants, and later to the Protector Cromwell, at 10 per cent. interest. In this way the goldsmiths became the first private bankers, receiving deposits, issuing paper receipts, and lending money in return for interest. After the Restoration there was a steady growth of this kind of banking.

In course of time the bankers' receipts began to be regarded as valuable pieces of paper, and out of them arose what we call a bank-note, which is really merely a banker's promise to produce on demand a certain sum. Another convenient form of payment also arose. A man with a deposit at a bank could now hand to a person to whom he owed money a letter addressed to the banker. For example, when Mr. Wynyarde owed Mr. Daniel £5, he wrote—

* *There had been banks in Italy and in the Netherlands since the Middle Ages. Lending money for interest had been forbidden by the Church in the Middle Ages, and the prejudice lingered long.*

"Nov. 16, 1689.

"Mr. Jackson.—Pray pay to the bearer hereof, Mr. Daniel, broker, five pounds, and place to the accompt of

Your loving friend,

John Wynyarde."

This was how cheques grew up.

So far all English banks were private ones. If the banker lent money unwisely he might fail, and the depositors who banked with him would lose their money. Thus, when Charles II., in 1672, dealt a deadly blow at banking by borrowing of the goldsmiths at 8 per cent. and refusing to pay the capital, many goldsmiths and many private people were ruined. When William III., therefore, wanted to borrow money, in 1694, private bankers and merchants were afraid to lend. It was then that William Paterson, a Scotsman who had been a pedlar, devised the scheme of founding a Joint Stock Company of Bankers. The company lent to the Exchequer at 8 per cent. interest, and the interest and capital were secured to them by certain regular taxes which were set aside by parliament for the purpose. The members of the company were thus guaranteed against failure. They were further allowed to issue bank-notes so long as the total value of the notes issued was not greater than the interest due to them from the Exchequer. No other London bank was allowed to issue notes. This was the origin of the Bank of England. Its notes were accepted as perfectly safe all over England; merchants and traders could deposit money with it, without risk of loss; and men of good reputation could borrow from it at reasonable rates of interest. The existence of the Bank of England, therefore, encouraged the use of cheques, bank-notes, and other forms of credit, and helped to develop trade.

The introduction of turnpikes at intervals along certain of the main roads was the beginning of another great change in inland trade, though the chief results were not seen till after 1760. Hitherto each parish had repaired its own roads, and the condition of a great highway might vary with every little parish through which it passed. In 1663, however, part of the great North Road, running through the counties of Hertford, Cambridge, and Huntingdon was made, by Act of Parliament, a turnpike road. The tolls collected at the gates were to be paid over to special trustees—a body of local gentlemen ; and the trustees were required to spend the money in keeping the road in repair. They appointed a surveyor, part of whose business it was to see that each parish did its unpaid work on its own particular bit of road, and who also hired additional labour. From 1716 onwards, turnpikes were gradually introduced by private Acts of Parliament for many important sections of the main roads. As Defoe wrote in 1724—

"Turnpikes or Toll-bars have been set up on the several great Roads of England, beginning at London, and proceeding thro' almost all those dirty deep Roads, in the Midland counties especially ; at which Turn-pikes all Carriages, Droves of Cattle, and Travellers on Horseback, are obliged to pay an easy Toll ; that is to say, a Horse a penny, a Coach three Pence, a Cart four Pence, at some six Pence to eight Pence, a Waggon six Pence, in some a Shilling, and the like ; Cattle pay by the Score, or by the Head, in some places more, in some less."

The turnpike trustees of many roads built bridges over streams where fords had existed before, opened channels to carry off surplus water, and built dams and sluices. When Defoe wrote, in 1724, the road from London to Harwich had been thus treated, and also parts of Watling Street which ran through Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. On the south of the Thames part of the two main roads into Kent, and part also of the road into Sussex, had been given turnpikes. The roads whereby the Watling Street traffic entered London, however, were still in execrable condition. From Highgate

to London the pack-horses and waggons which entered by Aldersgate, the cattle which diverged to Smithfield, and the coaches which came to Gray's Inn and Clerkenwell, came by roads which were "in the last extremity of badness."

Another great change which benefited inland trade was the introduction of regular posts on certain main and cross-roads. The great developments in the postal system will be dealt with in another volume.

Book List

Author.	Book.	Publisher.
Pratt, E. A. ..	A History of Inland Transport and Communication in England	*Kegan Paul.*
Webb, S. and B. ..	The King's Highway	*Longmans.*
Walford, C. ..	Fairs Past and Present ..	*Methuen.*
Bates, E. S. ..	Touring in 1600	*Constable.*
Sydney, W. C. ..	England and the English in the 18th Century (vol. 2)	*John Grant.*
Harper, C. I. ..	Half Hours with the Highwaymen	*Chapman & Hall.*
,,	The Old Inns of Old England ..	,,

CHAPTER V

OVERSEAS TRADE (1600–1660)

"If true nobility should have taken its foundation from the courage of men, and from their valour, there is no vocation wherein there is so many useful and principal parts of a man required as in these two (viz. Navigation and Commerce), for they are not only to adventure and hazard their own persons, but also their estates, goods, and what-

FIG. 21.—An early 17th century merchant and his wife.
(*From John Speed's Atlas*, 1611–12.)

ever they have, amongst men of all Nations, and Customs, Laws and Religions, wheresoever they are inhabited."

THUS writes one who was himself a foreign merchant in the days of Charles I., knowing full well that overseas trade was a great adventure, both for the mariners who navigated the

ships, and for the merchants who bought and exchanged the goods.

The risks run by the mariners of those days are difficult for us fully to realise. The very ships were crazily built, for shipbuilders still wrought by rule of thumb, and not by accurate measurement, or by scientific calculation of length, depth, and proportions. Vessels were often top-heavy, were difficult to steer, and quickly became unmanageable in a gale. Even in the calmest weather there were dangers in putting out to sea. There were no accurate charts of the sandbanks, shoals, and submerged rocks along our coasts; there were no buoys, bells or light-ships to mark them; even the Goodwin Sands were traceable at high tide only by white-crested breakers, and hundreds of lives were lost on them yearly, within full sight of land. The headlands were not as a rule marked by lighthouses; rough iron braziers or low brick or stone towers on which fires of coal or wood, exposed to rain and wind, smouldered or blazed, gave a doubtful sign to the troubled ship-master that danger was near.

FIG. 22.—A ship of 1620.

(*From the frontispiece to Bacon's "Novum Organum."*)

Once out in the open sea, pirates were an ever-present

danger. The creeks on the Devonshire and Cornish coasts were notorious haunts for English pirates, who were often in league with the people on shore for the sale of stolen goods and supply of provisions. The Irish were on the friendliest terms with pirates, and freely bought and sold from them. Dunkirk was the home of foreign pirates who pestered the whole of the Channel. The Mediterranean was beset by a more fearsome race, the Mohammedan Corsairs from Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli on the North African Coast. Nominally parts of the Turkish dominions, these three principalities were under rulers who were practically independent of the Sultan. Their seamen were the most famous pirates in the world ; some of them were Turks, some were Moors, and some were renegade Christians. In the 16th century, in their great galleys, driven by oar and sail and rowed by slaves, they had haunted only the Mediterranean. In the 17th century they adopted, in addition to galleys, sailing-ships without oars, for the purpose of ocean traffic ; they were now, therefore, able to pass the Straits of Gibraltar, and to terrify fishermen and mariners within sight of the very coasts of Britain. An English ship's captain knew when he sighted a distant sail that it might be that of an Algerian Corsair, heavily armed with cannon, with a dark-skinned crew, possibly captained by some renegade Englishman who knew every creek on the coast. If he fell into such hands, not only would his cargo be seized, but he and his crew would be taken to Algiers, Tunis, or Tripoli, to be sold by auction as slaves, and to toil for the rest of their days chained to the bench of a Mediterranean galley. Half naked, straining every nerve to wield the immense galley-oars, driven by the lash, they would end their days in slavery unless rescued or ransomed from home. In 1628 it was said that there were 15,000 English slaves at Algiers alone, and throughout the reigns of James I. and Charles I. subscriptions were

from time to time raised in England for the ransom of such men. In time of war between European nations another danger which beset mariners came from privateers. Every government was accustomed to give to its seamen "letters of marque" for time of war; armed with these a ship's crew led the life of pirates, attacking the vessels of enemy countries, and robbing at will for their own profit. A ship returning from a long voyage might not know that France was at war with England till a French privateer set her guns at her.

Another trial for the mariner was that, however storm-tossed, he had often the utmost difficulty in putting into harbour; once there he was not very safe. At the present day, important harbours on the coast are protected from the open sea by strong stone piers and jetties, so that ships can ride at anchor in deep water in the wildest weather. But so great an engineering feat as that of building a stone pier in deep water was impossible in those days; a few harbours, such as Yarmouth and Lyme Regis, had piers of oaken piles and rough stones, but these were liable to be washed away in a storm. Most of the harbours up and down our coasts were open roadsteads or river estuaries, where ships tossed at anchor, or were dragged high and dry on the mud of the shore.

All these dangers beset seamen, even if they went no further than the ports of Europe or the eastern Mediterranean. But in the 17th century ocean traffic was developing; seamen who embarked on it met further dangers. They had to navigate with the aid of exceedingly inaccurate maps of the world. A writer of 1724 says—

"It must be observed that our speculative mathematicians and geographers, who are no doubt men of the greatest learning, seldom travel farther than their closets for their knowledge, etc., are therefore unqualified to give us a good description of countries; it is for this reason that all our maps and atlases are so monstrously faulty, for these gentlemen are obliged to take their accounts from the reports of illiterate men. It must be noted also, that when the masters of

ships make discoveries this way, they are not fond of communicating them ; a man's knowing this or that coast, better than others, recommends him in his business, and makes him more useful, and he'll no more discover it than a tradesman will the mystery of his trade."

Another difficulty arose from inability to judge longitude. Seamen could tell their latitude by measuring the height of the noonday sun, but they were unable to keep an accurate account of their longitude, because no timepiece yet invented would keep for them European time at sea ; and longitude east or west of a given meridian is discoverable only by comparing the time at that meridian as shown by a watch or clock with the actual time as shown by the sun. Even with the aid of the mariner's compass, a ship's captain might easily sail some hundreds of miles from his course. Sickness was another danger, arising from the length of the ocean voyages of the period ; bad food and beer, and a diet of too much salted meat with little or no vegetable food, led to scurvy, of which many sickened and died. Lastly, once outside European waters, the ships of all nations felt free to attack and rob each other, regardless of whether their respective countries were at peace or at war.

At the end of the 15th century, when the Portuguese had discovered the Cape route to India and the East Indies, and Christopher Columbus had found the New World for Spain, these two countries had set up a monstrous claim to the whole of the ocean traffic of the world, based on these discoveries. More recently Spain had, in 1580, conquered Portugal,* and acquired all her East Indian trading settlements. Three other countries, however, were in the 17th century beginning to dispute with Spain the right to ocean trade, the United Netherlands, France, and England. Wherever the ships of these nations met, fighting was likely to ensue. The result of these dangers was that ships engaged in foreign trade must

* *Portugal remained a Spanish possession till* 1648.

be heavily armed with cannon, and the crews must be well able to fight. Such were some of the difficulties of the mariner's part of the trading enterprise.

The merchant ran risks of a different kind. Very often he and his firm actually owned the ships; sometimes, however, he entrusted his goods to a master-mariner who navigated his own vessel. But, in any case, the merchant sent out a rich cargo of which he might never hear again.

> "Believe me, Sir, had I such venture forth,
> The better part of my affections would
> Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
> Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind;
> Peering in maps for ports, and piers, and roads;
> And every object that might make me fear
> Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
> Would make me sad."

Thus did Solanio reveal to the Merchant of Venice the ordinary Englishman's admiration for the courage and valour of the merchant. But before a man attained to the wealth and prosperity of Antonio, he must learn his trade through many painful years of work and personal risk.

He was first apprenticed for seven years to some successful merchant or firm of merchants, and at first he worked in the home warehouses and counting-house of his employers, whether in London, or Bristol, or Hull, or wherever his master or masters might reside. He lived in the house, and had meals with the family of his employer, and was gradually initiated into the mysteries of buying goods in the home market, of packing and storing them in the warehouse, of driving them down to harbour, paying customs on them, or stowing them on ship-board. He learned to meet incoming vessels, to watch the weighing and the measuring involved in the payment of customs on goods from abroad; he learned perhaps to dispute the findings of the custom-house officer, and even to press a

tip into his hands and drive quickly away with the goods. He learned to keep accounts, and to write letters to inland traders, and to the partners or other agents of his master who were residing in foreign ports; for every successful merchant had either a partner or agents or factors to buy and sell for him in places to which he sent his goods. As the apprentice grew more experienced he was often sent to finish his apprenticeship in one of these foreign ports, working under the eyes of his master's partner.

The life of a merchant in a foreign port was no easy one. He was often away for many years, and he always ran considerable risks. Even in ports of Europe the native merchants were frequently hostile to foreigners who came for trade. But many merchants at the opening of the 17th century had agents further afield. In 1662, John Verney, the second son of Sir Ralph Verney,* having already been apprenticed to Gabriel Roberts of London, was sent to Aleppo to finish his time under two junior partners, William Roberts and John Sheppard. John Verney was away from home for twelve years, long after his apprenticeship expired. The group of English merchants who traded to the Levant had a joint "factory," which was really a combined residence and warehouse, in Aleppo, and here John Verney lived, with forty-nine other Englishmen, merchants, or apprentices. To the market at Aleppo long strings of camels bore goods from Persia, Arabia, and India; fine cotton goods and cotton wool, spices, drugs, dyes, gems, raw silks, carpets, and many other things. He had to help his master's two partners to buy in the market goods which seemed likely to sell in England, and this required much tact and judgment, and probably the knowledge of at least one Oriental language in which to bargain and haggle. Once a

* *See pp.* 8, 10 *and* 15.

year when the ships came from England to Scanderoon, the port of Aleppo, John Verney and his friends went down to the port, 100 miles away, with the goods which they had bought during the year. They received the goods which Gabriel Roberts had sent out, chiefly English cloth, and brought them back to Aleppo to sell. The life was a hazardous one. Englishmen, while riding in the open country, were sometimes attacked by robbers and slain. Many caught the plague and died. Sometimes years passed without letters from relatives at home, owing to the dangers run by those who undertook to bring them. In 1667, John Verney complained that it was 2½ years since he had heard from his relatives, though he had repeatedly written for news.

The difficulties of foreign trade made it extremely important that, even in European ports, Englishmen should hold together, and maintain by good conduct, and a high standard of honest trading, the reputation of their countrymen. Rulers of foreign countries must be persuaded that it was for their advantage to permit English merchants to trade, and thus be induced not only to admit them but to protect them from the hostility of their own merchant subjects, to moderate customs for their benefit, and to allow them to go to law in their courts in order to recover debts from their own subjects. But one dishonest or greedy English merchant could endanger the trade in a country for all the rest, by selling inferior wares, and by other bad conduct calculated to make Englishmen and their goods unpopular.

Such considerations as these had led to the foundation of companies of merchants, to each of which was given the sole right of trading to a particular region, and also the power to make rules and regulations for the conduct of every individual member. At least one such company had originated in the 14th century, and was flourishing in the days of Elizabeth and James I.

It was known as the Company of Merchant Adventurers of England. It resembled a medieval craft-gild rather than a modern company; for each merchant or firm of merchants who belonged traded separately, and ran separate risks, though the merchant or firm was bound to observe the rules of the company, and to pay entrance fees and other dues to its common funds. Such a body was known as a Regulated Company. The Merchant Adventurers held charters from many sovereigns, and Elizabeth gave additional privileges. By 1600 they had the exclusive right of trading from England to the European ports which lay betwen the Somme and the Elbe, and they had the power to punish "interlopers" or merchants who traded within their prescribed area without joining the company.* The members of the Company of Merchant Adventurers were traders living in Newcastle, Hull, York, Norwich, Ipswich, London, Exeter, and other ports, by far the larger number living in London. In each of the foreign ports to which they traded they erected a "factory," which combined a residence for merchants, their agents and apprentices, and warehouses for storing, and counting-houses for sale of goods. The life in a factory was not unlike that of a college; strict rules of conduct were imposed by the company, and the younger residents were not allowed to be out after a certain hour at night without due reason. Strict rules were also made as to the quality, price, and quantity of goods sold. All rules and regulations were made by a court; this sat at the principal factory of the company, which was always in one of the foreign ports. In the 17th century this head factory was settled at Hamburg, whence the company is often called the Hamburg Company.

* *Such interlopers were regarded as blackguards, because while enjoying the advantages secured by the companies, they refused to pay their share of the costs.*

The merchants of this company exported white and coloured cloth, lead, tin, hides, tallow, and sometimes corn. They imported wines, copper, steel, iron, copper wire, gunpowder, and all sorts of German toys and other small articles made in Nuremburg ; they also bought Italian goods, such as silks, velvets, and cloth of gold, which the energetic Dutch merchants had brought by sea from Italy, or which German traders brought on pack-horses over the Alpine passes, and by boat down the Rhine or the Elbe.

Another example of a Regulated Company was the Eastland Company, founded in 1579, and granted by Elizabeth the monopoly of trade to the Baltic coast. The shores of the Baltic, owned by Norway and Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and several small German states, were clothed with virgin forest and afforded apparently inexhaustible timber supplies. The company, therefore, did good work in exchanging English cloth for naval stores, such as timber, masts, tar, and hemp ; for as our own forests diminished thoughtful people began to see that it was unwise to rely wholly on these for our ships. Most members of this company lived in London, but some in Newcastle, York, Hull, Lynn, Ipswich, Plymouth, and Bristol. They were ruled by a principal governor and court which sat in London, and they maintained residential factories in many Baltic ports, each with a governor appointed in London.

A third important example of a Regulated Company, founded by Elizabeth, was the Turkey or Levant Company, to which she granted the sole right of trade with the Turkish dominions. The latter extended, in the early 17th century, along the whole Mediterranean coast eastwards from the Adriatic. The countries round the Ægean Sea were noted for raisins and currants ; raw cotton grew on the shores of the Levant ; above all, the ports of Syria had been noted for centuries for the oriental products which came from Persia, India, and

Arabia. The company erected two factories, one at Smyrna, and the other at Aleppo. It was to this company that Gabriel Roberts, of London, belonged, and it was in their factory at Aleppo that John Verney resided.*

The Regulated Company was suited to European or Levant trade. A very different type, however, was growing up, in order to undertake the far more difficult commerce of the ocean. This was the Joint Stock Company, the most famous example of which was the East India Company. Up to the year 1590 we had left to Spain and Portugal the trade by the Cape of Good Hope to the East Indies and India; but at the close of the reign of Elizabeth the Dutch and the French were beginning to send ships. In 1600 a group of 218 Londoners—knights, aldermen, merchants, and tradesmen—obtained a charter from the queen, which allowed them to form a company, and granted to them the monopoly of English trade in the East, from the Cape of Good Hope to Magellan Straits.

The founders of the company knew that trade to these regions was an unusually risky adventure. Spaniards, Portuguese, French, and Dutch must be met and fought with, for the right of trading on these seas. The hearts of Eastern princes must be won, before Englishmen would be allowed to trade there at all. A voyage to the Far East must therefore be conducted on the lines of a naval expedition, and under a single command. They therefore determined at their very first meeting to allow no private ship to be sent, and no private commodities to be embarked. All who joined must pay down money, or, in other words, must take shares, and with this money ships and goods would be purchased as the joint stock of all the members. The company would appoint and pay merchants, captains, and crews to manage the expedition. When the ships came home again the cargo would

* *See p.* 98.

be divided amongst the members in proportion to the shares they had taken. Such a company as this was known as a Joint Stock Company. At first the members invested their money only for one voyage; when the ships came home every member expected to have goods to the value of the money he had paid, and a great deal more besides to pay him for the risk; or, as we should say, every one expected to have his capital back as well as his profit or interest. But after a few years this led to great confusion in the accounts, and each member was obliged to leave his capital in the hands of the company so long as he remained a member, and to be content with receiving merely the interest.

The earliest voyages of the East India Company were taken to the East Indies, and not to India. On the first voyage, which started in February, 1601, they won the favour of native princes in the islands of Sumatra and Java, by dint of friendly letters which they took from Elizabeth, and presents from the company of gold, silver, plate, feather fans, and head-dresses, looking-glasses, and the like. In spite of the indignation and hostility of the Portuguese whom they found there, they were able to bring home a rich cargo of pepper, cloves, cinnamon, and a considerable quantity of calico and other goods, which they had seized on a Portuguese vessel. They left a certain number of merchants out there as their agents for the purchase of goods, and they reached England again in September, 1603. On the second voyage they met a considerable fleet of Dutch vessels off Java, and this was the beginning of trouble. The Dutch were more skilful traders than the English, and owned far more ships. Before very many voyages were made fighting began between Dutch and English. Our company, therefore, was obliged to drop trade with the East Indies, and try to win the favour of the native princes of India. In 1612 a fleet of four vessels, with merchants

and merchandise on board, was sent to Surat, on the north-west coast, and after a hot fight with a fleet of Portuguese ships, the merchants were allowed to land. The Great Moghul, or Emperor of India, gave them permission to build a factory at Surat, his principal port, and thenceforward the East India Company traded almost entirely with India. The factory at Surat was very like the factories of merchant companies in Europe, and in the course of time other similar factories were built. In 1639 the company purchased a small territory on the east coast of India, 6 miles long and 1 mile broad with a little island 500 yards long; here they built another famous factory protected by Fort St. George.

The direct traffic by sea with India, which was thus opened up, reduced the price of oriental commodities in England. Since the capture of Lisbon by Spain in 1580, such goods had been coming to London by land route to Aleppo, and thence by the Levant Company's ships to England. An eminent merchant of London, who was a director of the East India Company in 1621, says that pepper, which in that year was only 1*s.* 8*d.* a pound in England, had cost as much as 6*s.* before the East India Company was founded. He drew up a table to show the prices of goods: first, in India; second, at Aleppo by land route; and, thirdly, in England when brought by the Cape route. It shows that the Levant Company could no longer afford to bring many goods to England, since their price in the market of Aleppo was nearly as much as the price they could get in England. The following are examples drawn from his table :—

	In the Indies.	*At Aleppo.*	*In England by the E.I.C.'s route.*
	s. d.	*s. d.*	*s. d.*
Pepper, per lb.	2	2 0	1 8
Cloves ,,	9	4 9	6 0
Mace ,,	8	4 9	6 0
Nutmegs ,,	4	2 4	2 6
Indigo ,,	1 2	4 4	5 0

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This writer gives a vivid account of the activities brought into play by the East India Company—the cutting of timber in the forests of Hampshire, Essex, Kent, and Berkshire—the hoarding of planks, masts, iron, cordage, anchors, ordnance, powder, shot, victuals, wine, and cider, "and a world of other things" in their yards and storehouses at Deptford and Blackwall—the building and repairing of ships—the coming and going of fleets.

"The East India Company (besides their fleet of ships, going and coming, and also already in the Indies) are continually building, repairing, rigging, victualling, and furnishing to Sea, with all provision needful for such a long voyage, some 7 or 8 great ships yearly; which are to be seen at Anchor in the River of Thames in a great forwardness some 5 or 6 months together before they commonly depart for the Indies, which is about the month of March; and they are no sooner got off from the coast of England, but shortly after, is the season for our ships to return from the Indies."

The reign of Elizabeth had given promise of great trade expansion. This promise, between 1600 and 1660, was not fulfilled. The neglect of the navy by James I. and Charles I., the Civil War, and the uncertainty of revolutionary governments between 1649 and 1660 were all very bad for trade.

England was as yet by no means in the van of the world in trade. In the 17th century France, Holland and England competed together for mastery of the seas. Of these three countries England was in many respects, the most backward. The France of the early 17th century, under the great King Henry of Navarre, was growing rich and prosperous. The toleration which he gave to Huguenots by the Edict of Nantes, in 1599, enabled a very industrious population to pursue manufactures in peace; and the king was responsible for other far-sighted measures of encouragement for industry and internal trade. Even more remarkable, however, was the progress of Holland. This little country, which had freed

herself from Spain in 1580, had no exports of her own with which to trade. The country was flat; the people did not grow more corn than they needed; they were not great manufacturers; they had no great forests for shipbuilding. Yet they were the greatest navigators and merchants of the world. Already, in James I.'s reign, an anonymous writer had pointed out in a memorandum to the king that they were the great carriers of Europe. The Dutch had immense warehouses, and in these they stored corn, raw materials and manufactures, and goods from all parts of the world, ready to sell again. They sent 3000 ships a year to the shores of the Baltic, and brought back timber and other naval supplies; through the Straits of Dover they sent 2000 ships a year, to France, Spain, Portugal, and Italy. From England they fetched undressed cloth, lead, tin, and in years of plenty corn. To our ports they brought supplies of timber, fish and other goods, under-selling the English merchants. This they were able to do because their ships were better built, and could be navigated by fewer men. The anonymous writer says—

"Though an English ship of 200 tun and a Holland ship, or any other of the petty states of the same burthen, be at Danske, or any other place beyond the seas, or in England, they do serve the merchant better cheap by one hundred pounds in his freight than we can, by reason he hath but nine or ten mariners, and we near thirty, thus he saveth near twenty men and meat and wages in a journey."

The Dutch were, in fact, the universal providers. We have seen how they ousted our seamen from the East Indies. From Dutch warehouses goods from Asia and Africa could be imported to England. With the English North American colonies, six of which were established before 1660, and with our colonies in the West Indies, the Dutch did a flourishing trade, supplying them with manufactured goods, and bringing home tobacco, sugar, dyes, grain and other things in return.

Holland was in a central position for the world's trade, and the Dutch owned by far the largest number of vessels.

From Richard II.'s reign onwards, English statesmen had realised the need for an island country to have a big merchant fleet, and a law had been passed in his reign, though not really enforced, which laid down that merchandise entering and leaving England should be carried in English ships. The Tudors had passed somewhat similar laws. From the time when the first English colonies were founded, in Virginia in 1606, and in Massachusetts Bay in 1629, the idea had grown that colonies should be profitable to the shipping of the Mother Country. Charles I. had by proclamation tried to enforce the Navigation Acts of the Tudors, and had endeavoured to prevent goods between England and her colonies being carried in any but English ships.

When the Commonwealth succeeded the king, parliament passed, in 1651, the famous Navigation Act, which was really aimed at Dutch shipping. It laid down first, that goods imported to England or her dominions which were grown or manufactured in Asia, Africa, or America, were to be carried straight to the English or colonial ports, and in ships owned and chiefly manned by Englishmen; second, that goods imported to England or her dominions, which were grown or manufactured in European countries, were similarly to be carried direct, and either in English ships or in those of the country which produced them. Since Holland had no products of her own in which to trade with us, this practically forbade Dutch ships to traffic at all with England or her colonies. This was the main cause of the first Dutch war, which began in 1652. It dealt a great blow at Dutch power; but, though defeated, the Dutch still remained our most serious trade rivals.

Book List

Author.	Book.	Publisher.
Oppenheim, W.	History of the Administration of the Navy and of Merchant Shipping (to 1660)	*John Lane.*
Hannay, D.	The Sea Trader	*Harpers.*
Stevens, H. (Ed.)	The Dawn of British Trade to the East Indies 1599–1603	*Stevens.*
Willson, B. ..	Ledger and Sword (East India Company), Vol. I.	*Longmans.*
Scott, W. R. ..	Joint Stock Companies to 1720, Vols. I. & II.	*Cambridge Press.*
Lingelbach, W. E.	Internal Organisation of the Merchant Adventures of England	*Royal Hist. Soc., Vol. XVI.* 1902.
Lane-Poole, S.	The Barbary Corsairs	*Fisher Unwin.*
Playfair, R. L.	The Scourge of Christendom (Algerian Pirates) ..	*John Murray.*

CHAPTER VI

OVERSEAS TRADE (1660–1760)

WHEN the king came home in 1660, an era opened in which the great trade advantages of Britain were to have full scope. The Civil War was over. The country was full of returned peers and gentlemen, whose minds were full of the superiority of continental methods, particularly those of France and Holland. The King, the Duke of York, Prince Rupert, Lord Chancellor Clarendon, and the upper classes generally, were interested in, and even took part in, trade. An annual description of England, the "Angliæ Notitia," first published in 1679, says—

> "The state of Gentry was anciently such that it was accounted an abasing of Gentry to put their Sons to get their Living by Shopkeeping (yet we find it done many times in the four last Centuries) . . . for Tradesmen in all Ages and Nations have been reputed ignoble, in regard of the doubleness of their Tongue, without which they hardly grow rich . . . and yet, to the shame of our Nation we have seen of late not only the Sons of Baronets, Knights, and Gentlemen selling in Shops, and sometimes of Pedling Trades, far more fit for Women and their Daughters, but also an Earl of the Kingdom, subjecting his Son to an Apprentisage and Trade."

In the century which followed 1660, English overseas trade went forward in three great directions: first, with countries in Europe *; second, with the New World, of the West; and, thirdly, with the East.

In trade with European countries the great mark of the century is the growth of hostility to the French, and the

* *See description of Yarmouth, p.* 173.

continuance of our jealousy of the Dutch, for both nations we regarded as our rivals. Many books and pamphlets were written to explain French and Dutch methods. Thus, in 1663, a certain Samuel Fortray published "England's Interest and Improvement." In this he told how England was being flooded with French manufactures. Velvets, satins, cloth of gold and silver came from Lyons and from Tours; silks, ribbons, laces, and silk buttons from Paris and Rouen; and from other parts of France, serges, beaver and silk hats, belts, girdles, fans, looking-glasses, pins, needles, gloves, paper, linen, together with wines, brandy, vinegar, salt, and many other things. The total annual value he reckoned at £2,600,000, while we in return, he declared, sent to France only woollen cloths, knitted stockings, coals, lead, and a few other things, to the total value of £1,000,000 a year. Other writers told of Holland. For example, in 1677, Andrew Yarranton published "England's Improvement by Sea and Land," in which he described the wonderful banking system of Holland, its public register for land, its system of canal and river transport.

The France of the period between 1661 and 1672 was under the rule of Louis XIV.'s famous minister, Colbert. A man of the middle class, he aimed, as Henry of Navarre had done, to make France rich and great by industry and commerce rather than by war. He endeavoured to improve French manufactures by offering rewards to skilled workmen—Dutch, German, Swedish, Venetian, and English—to induce them to settle in France. He improved inland trade by having better roads made, and by the construction of canals. He sent out men and women as colonists to settle in French Canada, where, hitherto, the French had had merely a fur station (Quebec), and a mission station (Montreal);

he was thus the real founder of those colonies. He encouraged the growth of a great new French East India Company, since an old one founded in 1604 had done little. He urged the repair of old harbours and arsenals at Toulon, Brest, Rochefort, Le Havre; he bought Dunkirk from the English; and he stimulated shipbuilding. He did all that he could to support the French Huguenots, who were amongst the most industrious and thrifty workers of France. But he believed that the trade prosperity of other countries lessened that of France; and he adopted an attitude of hostility, particularly to the trade of Holland and of England. In 1667 he got Louis XIV. to issue an Edict which made duties on foreign goods at the French ports so high that their import was practically prohibited. This Edict excluded English goods from France. While English peers and merchants admired French trade policy, they were angry when it touched themselves, and they were thenceforth eager to imitate Colbert, and exclude French goods from England. The Stuart kings, Charles II. and James II., and their Court Party,* however, were friendly to France; and though an Act forbidding French trade was passed by one parliament in 1678, it was abolished by another under James II.

With the Revolution of 1688, and the coming of William of Orange, a period began in which trade hostility to France had full play. In the first place, William III. was the leader of the Dutch, a people whom the French were threatening to destroy. Secondly, the Whigs who brought him over were very powerful in his reign and in that of Anne, while from 1714 to 1760 they ruled England under the two German kings, George I. and George II. Thirdly, from 1685 onwards, and far

* *There were two English parties: the Court Party (later called the Tories) who supported these kings, and the Country Party (later called Whigs) composed largely of great peers, merchants, and traders who opposed these two kings.*

into Anne's reign, Huguenots were fleeing from France to England. Colbert had died in 1680, and in 1685 Louis XIV. revoked the Edict of Nantes. He forbade all Protestant meetings for public worship, exiled the Huguenot ministers, and closed their schools. He forbade Huguenot laymen to leave France; men who attempted it and were caught were sent as slaves to row in the galleys, and women were sent to prison. Yet, for the next twenty years, thousands left France for ever. They went to Prussia and to Holland, and they came to England. They were craftsmen, traders and merchants, and they supported the Whigs against France. In 1692, in answer to the French customs, we laid special duties on all imports from France of 25 per cent. of the value, over and above the duties which we charged on goods from other countries. In 1696 we raised the extra duty to 50 per cent., and whenever in the 18th century the ordinary duties were increased the 50 per cent. on French goods was made additional. The consequence was that lawful trade between the two countries was throttled, and that from every creek and coast port along the opposite shores of Great Britain and of France smuggling went on. Defoe, writing in 1726, says—

"Their Government obliges them . . . to wear their own works however defective. . . . But after all, they do not supply themselves neither, and in spite of the severest Prohibition, in spite of Tyranny and the Terror of an absolute Government, they do, and will get English manufactures in, and do import very great Quantities too."

In a letter written in 1745 by Admiral Vernon, who commanded the Fleet in the Downs, we read—

"There are said to be in this town of Deal not less than 200 able young men and seafaring people who are known to have no visible way of getting a living, but by the infamous trade of smuggling, many keeping a horse and arms to be ready at all calls. At Dover it is conjectured there may be 400; at Ramsgate and Folkestone 300 each. And it is said that, within these 3 weeks, no less than nine cutters at a time have gone off from Folkestone to Boulogne; and it is conjectured that, from the town of Folkestone only, a thousand pounds a week is run over to Boulogne in the smuggling way. And about 6 or 7 days past,

a Dover cutter landed goods in the night under the Castle, that was carried off by a party of 60 horse, and the cutter supposed to have done it, came into Dover pier the next day."

Meanwhile, with Portugal, Spain, the Baltic lands and Italy trade developed. When Charles II. married Catherine of Bragança, a Portuguese princess, an alliance began, whereby we obtained the carrying trade between Portugal and her possessions in Brazil, Madeira, and the Azores. Later on, under Anne, in 1703, by the Methuen Treaty, English woollens were admitted at low rates to Portugal in return for lowered duties on Portuguese wine, so that our 18th century forefathers, if they could not get smuggled champagne or burgundy, drank nothing but port.* Trade with Spain, as far as her European possessions were concerned, was revived by a Treaty in 1667, whereby our merchants were admitted to Spanish ports and were granted religious toleration as long as they gave no offence. A vast export of English woollens from Exeter grew up in consequence. In the 18th century the trade was interrupted by wars in which Spain sided with France, but it was not finally lost. When we captured Gibraltar in Anne's reign, we got a fresh trading port. This made easier the trade with Italy, and in Defoe's day the Yarmouth merchants sent herrings and worsteds, and the Exeter merchants sent woollens to Genoa, Leghorn, Naples, Messina and Venice. With the Baltic lands and Germany also trade grew, the merchants of Yarmouth, Hull, and London exporting woollens and worsteds in return for naval stores. The monopoly rights of the great trading companies—the Merchant Adventurers and the Eastlanders—declined in this period, and the trade became virtually open to all.

On the other hand, with the Dutch our relations were at first dominated by the desire to kill out their carrying trade,

* *So-called because it was from Portugal.*

and the question was connected with our relations to our colonies. Every European nation at this time looked on its colonies as possessions existing mainly to develop the shipping, commerce, and wealth of the Mother Country. The Navigation Act of 1651 had been aimed directly at the Dutch carrying trade. In 1660, at the Restoration, a new Act was passed with a wider scope ; it aimed not merely to secure to England the carrying trade for herself and her dominions, but to make most of the trade actually pass through the Mother Country. Just as in the Middle Ages Calais had been at one period the staple * or market through which all raw wool exported from England must pass, so parliament now planned to make England the staple through which almost all goods must pass when coming from or going to the English dominions. The only exceptions were certain colonial goods, which were then regarded as of small importance, because England herself produced them, such as grain, timber, and fish.

In the first place, to secure the carrying trade, the Act laid down the following main principles :—

1. No goods must be imported into or exported from the English colonies except in English-built and English-owned ships, chiefly manned by Englishmen.†

2. Goods produced or manufactured in Africa, Asia, or America must only be imported to England in similar ships.

3. Goods produced or manufactured in any European country must be imported to England only in such English ships, or in ships of the country which produced them, sailing direct from that country.

Further, to make England the staple, the Act laid down

* *From the old French word Estaple (later étaple) meaning a market.*

† *The words "English" and "Englishmen" here refer to the people of England, Wales, Ireland, Berwick, and the English colonies and dominions. The Scots, till* 1707, *were excluded from the Act.*

that certain articles, the most valuable which the plantations produced, must, when exported from the colonies, go only to England, or to some other English possession. These articles in the original Act were sugar, tobacco, cotton-wool [*i.e.* raw cotton], indigo, ginger, and dye-woods.* When a ship sailed from a colonial port with these things on board, the master mariner must give a bond to the customs officer, undertaking to land the things in some port of England, Wales, Ireland,† or the dominions.

The most important English colonies of this period, in the eyes of English merchants, were, as the above list of goods shows, the tropical or sub-tropical ones—those of the West Indies, viz. Barbadoes, settled about 1625, and Jamaica, scandalously seized by us from Spain in 1655, without declaration of war; and some of those on the east coast of North America, viz. Virginia, founded in 1608, Maryland, founded in 1632, Carolina, founded in 1663, and split later into two. To these was added in the 18th century Georgia, founded under George I. Far less valued were the New England colonies, founded by Puritans between 1618 and 1636, or even New York, captured from the Dutch in the war of 1664–7, or Pennsylvania, founded by Quakers in 1681; for these northern colonies produced chiefly the grain, timber, and fish which England did not yet need.

The most important colonial product of the time was sugar. In the 16th century it had been grown for export only by the Portuguese of Brazil, but it had been introduced to Barbadoes by the early English colonists, and when we seized Jamaica we developed it there. It was produced on great plantations owned by wealthy Englishmen, and cultivated partly by downtrodden whites, sometimes kidnapped in

* *Such articles were said to be "enumerated."*
† *Ireland was omitted in* 1670.

England,* sometimes prisoners; these were helped by negro slaves. The English-grown sugar was cheaper than the Portuguese; it was shipped to London and other ports, and much of it was re-exported to Europe.

Another important product was the tobacco of Virginia, also grown in great plantations by poor whites and negroes. James I. had forbidden Englishmen at home to grow tobacco on moral grounds, as he thought it wrong to smoke. Charles I., Cromwell, and subsequent rulers forbade it in order to help the planters, and give them some return for being forced to export to England. By an Act of 1670, the Justices of the Peace in England were ordered to issue warrants to constables to pull up all the tobacco that was growing in England.

A third important product was the rice of Carolina, introduced there about 1688 by a lucky chance. A ship's captain, hailing from Madeira, happened to be in port, and he gave a settler of Carolina a bag of rice; the settler planted it, and thus unexpectedly proved that Carolina could grow the best rice in the world. The trade rapidly grew so large that by an Act of Queen Anne's reign, rice was "enumerated" on the list of goods which must be shipped to England.† In 1697 it was said that seven-eighths of our colonial trade was carried on with the sugar and tobacco colonies.

All the regulations were defied. Dutch ships waited at sea for coasting vessels from our colonies, which brought them out goods. Sometimes the Dutch smuggled openly in colonial ports. Yet the Navigation Acts tended in the main to bring much colonial produce to England to be re-exported

* *There was a white-slave traffic from England in children and others who simply disappeared from the ken of their friends. Prisoners were also exported.*

† *In the very same year naval stores such as turpentine, tar, hemp, masts, and spars were enumerated, for England was at war.*

abroad. They were therefore among the causes which in the end made England, and especially London, the great staple, emporium, or world's market to which to this day merchants come from many parts of the globe to buy goods.

The growing of sugar, tobacco, and rice produced in this period another important trade—that in negro slaves. White men found it hard to work in the heat of the tropics, and the native Indians of the West Indies were too delicate to be forced to work for long. In Africa, the negro tribes, like all primitive peoples, made slaves of other negroes when captured in war. From the beginning of the 16th century the Portuguese, who claimed the whole west coast of Africa, had begun to buy these negro slaves and ship them to Brazil, and to the Spanish West Indies. In the 17th century the Dutch came into the business, and the slaves used by the Virginia tobacco planters were at first sold to them by the Hollanders. The Portuguese and Dutch built forts on the west coast of Africa, and supplied them with warehouses for goods, and residences for traders. Only a few Englishmen took part in the trade until about 1625, for it was a risky one. The Dutch and Portuguese were hostile. The English traders who went out must take goods—copper bracelets, glass beads, coral, small iron, tin, and brassware, linens, woollens, gunpowder and firearms—to barter with the negroes for ivory, pepper, dyes, gold and, lastly, negroes. They, too, must have forts. They must secure the negroes on ships able to transport them on the long voyage to the West Indies. Until Barbadoes was colonised Englishmen could only sell negroes in the Indies by smuggling. The Spanish Government forbade foreigners to trade with the American dominions. Moreover, the right to import negroes belonged to the Spanish king

alone ; only people to whom he granted the " monopoly," or " contract," or, as Spaniards said, the " Asiento " might trade in them. All these dangers made it desirable for Englishmen to have a Joint Stock Company wealthy enough to build forts, and endowed by the king with a monopoly of the trade. Three such companies had been founded between 1588 and 1660, and all had failed ; another was founded in 1662 and failed also. Finally, in 1672, under the king's patronage, the Royal African Company was founded. It was granted the monopoly of the trade between Sallee and the Cape of Good Hope, with power to acquire territory and maintain forts. Thus the English slave trade was finally established. From 1680 to 1688 the company carried about 5000 slaves each year.

The trade was a profitable one. The negroes, closely packed in vessels specially constructed to hold from 100 to 600 each, were carried across the Atlantic to the British West Indies, and were sold, as the planters complained in 1688, at the high price of £20 a head because of the company's monopoly. It paid the planters, for a gang of twenty negroes, under one white overseer, quickly learned to hoe, manure, plant cane slips, and to weed, and cut the canes with a bill ; and only one slave to every 2 acres was needed. They also could learn to crush, boil, and clarify the sugar. From the British West Indies slaves were smuggled into the Spanish possessions, where the planters were very glad to buy them. With the purchase-money from his slaves the master of the slaver bought a cargo of hogsheads of sugar ; but because slaves cost more than sugar he always brought back to England a surplus in coin or bills of exchange. The round trip often took a year.

The successive African companies were all founded in London, and the Charter of 1672 virtually forbade merchants of

other English ports to take part in the trade. But in Bristol and other out-ports, and in London itself, independent traders or interlopers were already in the field. The company complained that they paid nothing towards the expenses of the forts. After the Revolution of 1688 the number of interlopers grew, and in 1698 parliament threw the trade open to them provided they paid to the company a moderate percentage of the value of their cargoes. After this the trade of the company declined, while that of private merchants in London, and still more in Bristol, grew. A petition to parliament in 1713 declared that the people of Bristol chiefly depended for their very subsistence on the West India and African trade, which employed great numbers in shipbuilding and in the manufacture of wool, iron, tin, copper, brass, and other goods, "a considerable part whereof is exported to Africa for buying of negroes."

In 1711, when the famous South Sea Company was founded for "trading in the South Seas and other parts of America, and for encouragement of fishing," a further impetus was given to the trade. At the end of the great European War, in 1713, Spain granted the Asiento for the import of negroes for thirty years to the British Crown; and the Crown handed it over to the South Sea Company. By the treaty 4800 negroes were to be imported each year to Spanish America, and also one British ship of 500 tons was allowed each year to go to the Portobello Fair on the Isthmus of Panama, and sell other cargo, duty free. The company was allowed factories at Cartagena, Panama, and Buenos Ayres.*

With the development of the colonial trade Liverpool grew in importance. In the early 17th century it was a third-rate port. In Defoe's recollection it had grown immensely,

* *The agreement was much abused, and led in* 1739 *to war with Spain.*

and it was the first English port to construct docks on any large scale. This is what he says in 1724—

"Liverpoole is one of the Wonders of Britain, and that more, in my Opinion, than any of the Wonders of the Peak; the Town was, at my first visiting it, about the Year 1680, a large, handsome, well built, and encreasing or thriving Town; at my second Visit, Anno 1690, it was much bigger than at my first seeing it, and, by the Report of the Inhabitants, more than twice as big as it was twenty Years before that; but, I think, I may safely say at this my third seeing it, for I was surpriz'd at the View, it was more than double what it was at the second; and, I am told, that it still visibly encreases both in Wealth, People, Business and Buildings: What it may grow to in time, I know not.

"The Town has now an opulent, flourishing and encreasing Trade, not rivalling Bristol, in the Trade to Virginia, and the English Island Colonies in America only, but is in a fair way to exceed and eclipse it, by encreasing every way in Wealth and Shipping. They trade round the whole Island, send Ships to Norway, to Hamburgh, and to the Baltick, as also to Holland and Flanders; so that, in a word, they are almost become like the Londoners, universal Merchants."

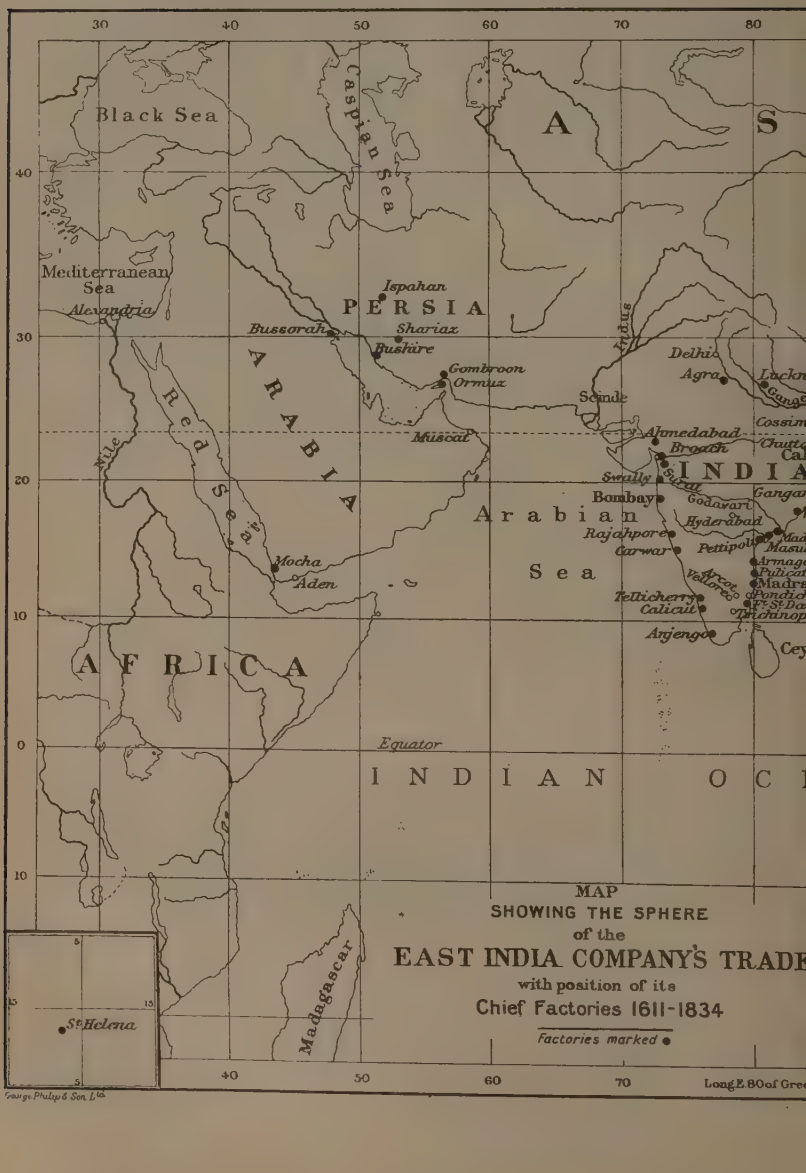
In the early 18th century Liverpool embarked on the slave trade, and by 1760 it was the chief slaving-port of the Old World, having outstripped Bristol and London. This was because by push and economy Liverpool traders undercut the others in price, selling slaves to planters 12 per cent. cheaper. In 1752 Liverpool traders owned eighty-seven slaving vessels carrying 25,000 negroes. Many slaves were landed and sold in England, and even sometimes were put up to auction on the steps of the Liverpool Custom-house. In 1758 the following typical advertisement appeared in a Liverpool paper:—

"For Sale a Healthful Negro Boy, about 5 feet high, well proportioned, of a mild, sober, honest disposition; has been with his present master 3 years, and used to wait on a table, and to assist in a stable."

Another branch of western trade which began with Charles II. was that of the Hudson Bay Company. The French had, in 1608, founded Quebec as a fur-trading station on the river St. Lawrence. Hither the Indians brought the

furs of animals they had captured and bartered them for European goods. In 1642 the French Jesuits had founded Montreal much further up the river, as a mission station. From these beginnings under Colbert's rule the French colony of Canada was growing up. But far to the north-west of French Canada lay the immense inland sea, 1000 miles long and 800 miles broad, which Henry Hudson, the Englishman, had discovered in James I.'s reign (1607). Beyond lay thousands of miles of forest and marsh, with tundra further north, known only to the Indians; this great district was the haunt of the beaver, sable, ermine, fox, musk, marten, and other fur-bearing animals. Two Frenchmen who had been there suggested to Prince Rupert the formation of an English company. The trade was a dangerous one, and therefore the new company, founded in 1670, was a Joint Stock Company resembling in some particulars the East India Company. Charles II. granted them in a charter "the sole trade and commerce of all those seas, straits, bays, rivers, lakes, creeks and sounds lying within the entrance of Hudson's Straits," except those "possessed by the subjects of any other Christian prince or state." A ship or two ships every year were sent out; "factories" were built of felled timber and defended by forts and guns; and the agents of the company who lived in them stored their goods such as vermilion, blankets, bails of coloured cloth and firearms, to barter with the Indians for furs. This was the beginning of the British occupation of the great north-west and was the origin of a large part of what is now the Dominion of Canada.

Our trade to the East, in the period from 1660 to 1760, was still largely in the hands of the East India Company, who had


30
40
50
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Black Sea
Caspian Sea
A
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Mediterranean Sea
Alexandria
Ispahan
PERSIA
Bussorah
Shiraz
Bushire
30
Gombroon
Ormuz
Indus
Delhi
Agra
Scinde
ARABIA
Red Sea
Nile
Muscat
Ahmedabad
Broach
INDIA
Surat
20
Bombay
Arabian
Godavari
Hyderabad
Rajahpore
Carwar
Pettipoli
Sea
Mocha
Aden
Arcot
Vellore
Tellicherry
Calicut
Arjengo
10
AFRICA
Equator
0
INDIAN
10
Madagascar
St. Helena
40
50
60
70
MAP
SHOWING THE SPHERE
of the
EAST INDIA COMPANY'S TRADE
with position of its
Chief Factories 1611-1834
Factories marked ●
George Philip & Son Ltd.

90
100
110
120
130
140
40
30
20
10
0
10
20
I A
CHINA
Yang tse kiang
Firando
Chusan
Ningpo
J A P A N
Amoy
Canton
Tropic of Cancer
Burma
Tonquin
P A C I F I C
Further India
Philippine Is
O C E A N
Pulo Condor
Malay Peninsula
Achin
Borneo
Celebes
Priaman
Indrapore
Bencoolen
Sillabar
Ft Marlborough
Banjermassin
Macassar
Amboyna
Banda
Java
I N D I E S
The London Geographical Institute

the monopoly of our ocean trade between the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn. The Levant or Turkey Company still had the trade with the Near East, *i.e.* with the eastern Mediterranean countries, but they complained that the goods which caravans of camels brought across the desert from Persia and India could not be sold so cheaply as those which the East India Company brought by sea. Both Charles II. and James II. favoured the East India Company. Charles allowed them to hold from the Crown for ever, at £10 a year, the Island of Bombay, a part of his wife's dowry which was of no use to him. Here a new factory was built, with a deputy-governor under the President of Surat, and Bombay later became the seat of the presidency. Charles also granted the company a new Charter, in which he allowed them to keep St. Helena, captured by them in 1651 from the Dutch; and there they put forts and stores for their ships going out to the East. He also gave them power to raise troops, English and native, and to make war against native states. The company's armed fleets, of some ten vessels each, carried out to the East broadcloth, tin, lead, quicksilver, and beads, and a great deal of coin, and gold and silver bullion to pay for the very much more valuable Eastern goods, which the merchants were to buy. They landed the goods at the principal factories, and the ships were then laden up with pepper, spices, silks, calicoes, fine chintz, and muslins, indigo, "cutlery wrought with gold," and the like. These goods were bought from native traders who came to the factories, and also from the bazaars and homes of village handicraftsmen in the interior; they were purchased by the company's agents. Some of these agents first collected the goods at the lesser factories at Lucknow and Agra, in the valley of the Ganges. Others went by sea to the company's factories in the Persian Gulf, and thence inland to Ispahan in Persia, where they

bought drugs, and soft woollens, and carpets ; others, again, went to Mocha on the Red Sea to buy coffee. Another important factory lay in the East Indies at Bantam, on the coast of Java, and from there the agents had in the 17th century already begun to trade with China for " tey " [tea], sugar, porcelain or fine china, and lacquered ware. From factories on the Sumatra coast came gold and elephant's teeth.

In 1674, Dr. Fryer, a surgeon under the East India Company, visited the factory at Surat. He said it was built of stone and carved timber. It had warehouses for goods on the ground floor, and " upper and lower galleries or terras-walks " above, with a convenient open place for meals, an oratory, and splendid lodgings for the President, and rooms for other residents. Here lived merchants, factors, and writers, the three grades in the company's service ; the writers were young clerks in apprenticeship, serving for five years at low pay and high premiums before becoming factors. When the ships came in, and the native traders came to buy and sell, the place was in uproar from ten a.m. till twelve, and from four p.m. till nightfall, which were the business hours. As one man said—

" Here they live (in Shipping-time) in a continual hurly-burly, the *Banyans* [= native traders] presenting themselves from the hour of Ten till Noon ; and then Afternoon at Four till Night, as if it were an Exchange at every Row ; below stairs the Packers, Warehouse-keepers, together with Merchants bringing and receiving Musters [= samples], make a meer *Billinsgate ;* * for if you make not a Noise, they hardly think you intent on what you are doing."

In 1687, owing to dangers of attack at Surat, the seat of the president was moved permanently to Bombay.

With the Revolution of 1688 all chartered companies were in risky plight, for parliament disapproved of monopoly

* *Billingsgate is the famous London wholesale market for fish, which is brought up the Thames by boat, and landed at the quay below London Bridge.*

powers granted merely by kings. The interlopers had always given trouble. Now they threatened to disregard the company's rights. Moreover, a second East India Company arose, and by offering to William III., who needed money for war, an immense sum on loan, virtually bribed the government to grant it the old company's rights. For ten years, from 1698 to 1708, the two companies competed. Finally, in 1708, parliament united them in one company, and granted the old monopoly powers. Thus placed anew on its feet the company continued to trade. In 1693 a new factory had been founded on the Hugli, a mouth of the Ganges, in an unhealthy part close to a group of native villages; and this factory, commanding the trade with Bengal and the Ganges, grew into the great city of Calcutta.

The company's servants in India were very badly paid. In Dr. Fryer's time (1674) a writer got £10, a factor £20, a merchant chief of a factory £40, and even the president at Surat only £300 a year. These agents, therefore, traded in India on their own account, and reckoned to make money apart from the company. In time they got into their hands the whole coast trade, and as the 18th century proceeded such men made great fortunes in private trade, and returned to England immensely rich. They were known as Nabobs.

In all these ways did English overseas trade develop, and somebody was found to boast, as early as 1694—

"Next to the purity of our Religion we are most considerable of any Nation in the World for the vastness and extensiveness of our Trade."

Book List

Author.	Book.	Publisher.
Hannay, David ..	The Sea Trader	*Harpers*
Wilson	Ledger and Sword (E. India Company) 2 Vols.	*Longmans.*
Williams, Gomer	History of the Liverpool Privateers and Slave Trade	*Heinemann.*
Harper, C. G. ..	The Smugglers	*Chapman & Hall.*
Keble-Chatterton, E.	(1) King's Cutters and Smugglers, 1700–1855	*Allen.*
,, ,,	(2) Sailing Ships and their Story	*Sidgwick & Jackson.*
Beer, G. L. ..	Origin of the British Colonial System, 1578–1660	*Macmillan.*
Woodward, W. H.	The Expansion of the British Empire	*Cambridge Press.*

CHAPTER VII

MANUFACTURES AND COAL MINING (1600–1760)

"JOHN BULL," the typical Englishman, is still attired by the popular artist as an 18th century farmer. The England of old times was, in fact, mainly an agricultural country. Yet the traveller of those days found manufactures everywhere. Every cottage and farm-house had its distaff or its spinning-wheel, and every village its weaver with his hand-loom ; for country-folk dressed in woollen or hempen "homespun," and put out their home-made linen and yarn to be woven by the village weaver, while cottagers in tens of thousands spun woollen yarn to sell to dealers. In the little towns and villages of Dorsetshire and Devonshire, and up in the Chiltern Hills, women sitting at cottage doors wrought fine linen thread into lace for the ruffles of elegant ladies and gentlemen. Round Stourbridge, in Dorsetshire, in the Midland Counties from Leicester to Lincolnshire, and in many other places, 17th century country-folk knitted stockings, an article of dress newly introduced during the 16th century. In countless little villages round "Bremischam," in Warwickshire, little hand-forges were to be seen in every home, where men and women made nails and other small articles of hardware. Glass was made in the villages of Sussex. Iron was smelted in the forests of the Weald and of Dean. Pots were made by cottagers with the hand-wheel. Remains of these old industries are occasionally still to be found ; round Yeovil, in Somersetshire,

the cottage glove-makers still ply their ancient trade; hand rope-makers, pillow-lace makers, and village shoemakers are yet at work; in the beech woods of the Chiltern Hills, here and there a rough thatched hut may sometimes be seen in which a solitary maker of chair-legs, who has bought up half a dozen felled tree-trunks, sits turning them on a rough hand lathe.

Four features marked the artisan's life in the period from 1600 to 1760. First, very often, he lived in a village, or even in a lonely farm-house or cottage, rather than in a town. Secondly, he knew something of agriculture, for his hand-manufacture was often a mere bye-industry taken up in winter and when farming was slack; and even if he worked at handicraft all the year round he had generally a cow on the common, a pig and a few geese, and at harvest he could be called upon to stop work and lend a hand. Thirdly, he was often his own master, bought his own materials, and sold the finished goods. Lastly, he owned his own tools, and therefore worked in his own home. In every type of manufacture, large or small, there are three necessary elements—raw materials, tools (or machinery), and the shelter or open site in which to do the work. These are known as capital, and the workman who owns all three is his own capitalist. In those days of hand-industry, this was often the case; capital and labour were not yet divided.

The most important industries of those days were the products of wool and of iron. With these, and with coal-mining this chapter will deal.

I. The Woollen Industry

By the 17th century manufactured woollens had replaced raw wool as our principal export. A writer in 1613 declared that for the sake of this industry God had killed out wolves

from England "as a blessing sent upon the nation" in order to preserve the sheep; and another writer in 1681 said that God had specially provided fuller's earth in England with which to cleanse the cloth. Parliament, by many Acts from the Middle Ages onwards, had protected and controlled this great industry. Thus, in Elizabeth's reign, a law was passed ordering the lower orders to wear none but woollen caps on Sundays and holy days; while from Charles II.'s reign the dead must be buried in none but woollen shrouds, and a certificate must be furnished of which the following is an example :—

"North Riding of Yorkshire (to wit).

"Be it remembered That on the 3rd Day of October, 1777, Mary Stephenson of Whitby in the said Riding being a credible Person doth make Oath, That Ann King late of Whitby aforesaid Quakeres on the 28th Sept. past was not put in, wrapt, or wound up, or buried in any Shirt, Shift, Sheet, or Shroud made or mingled with Flax, Hemp, Silk, Hair, Gold, or Silver, or other than what is made of Sheep's Wool only, or in any Coffin lined or faced with any Cloth, Stuff or any other Thing whatsoever, made or mingled with Flax, Hemp, Silk, Hair, Gold, or Silver, or any other Materials, but Sheep's Wool only.

"The Mark of
×
"Mary Stephenson.

"Sworn before me, one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said Riding.

"THOS. BOULBY."

The first main process in the manufacture of wool is carding. To card is to separate and arrange in parallel layers the matted hairs of the raw wool; in the old hand-industry carding implements resembled hair-brushes, with wire teeth instead of bristles. The second process is spinning, whereby the wool is drawn out from the carded mass and twisted so as to form a continuous thread, known as yarn: in the early 17th century this was still very often done by women with the primitive distaff and spindle, though the spinning-wheel had been coming into use since the 16th century. The third main step in the manufacture is weaving,

for which a loom is used. The hand-loom* consists of a heavy, wooden, box-shaped frame-work, across each end of which is fixed, at about 2½ feet from the ground, a horizontal roller, known as a beam. The roller at the end of the loom at which the weaver sits is called the "cloth-beam," because on it the finished cloth is gradually wound; the roller at the far end is called the "warp-beam."

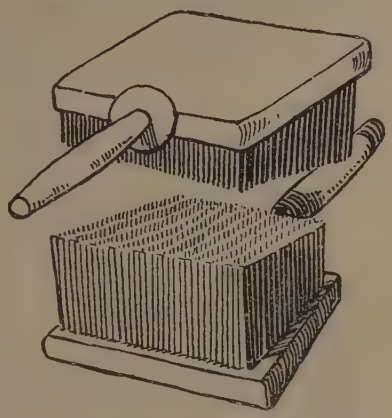


Fig. 23.—Hand-cards of the 18th century.
(*From an illustrated Itinerary of Lancashire.*)

A series of parallel threads of yarn, 24 yards long, *i.e.* the length of a complete piece of cloth, is first attached and wound round the warp-beam, and then carried horizontally across to the cloth-beam, to which the near ends are fixed. These threads, called the "warp," will form the length-threads of the finished material. The cross-threads are known as "weft." Suspended vertically between the cloth-beam and the warp-beam are two frames; each consists of two cross-bars which support a series of upright wires containing eyelets for threads to pass through. The wires are known as "healds." Before reaching the cloth-beam each warp-thread is passed through one of these eyelets, the first, third, fifth, seventh thread passing through the successive wires of one heald, and the second, fourth, sixth, eighth passing through those of the other heald, and so on across the material. Each set of healds is attached to a separate foot treadle, in such a

* *See Fig.* 28.

way that when one treadle is lowered the warp-threads passing through those healds are lowered, and a "shed" or aperture is formed between the odd and even numbered warp-threads. The process of weaving is akin to darning. When

FIG. 24.—The distaff and spindle. Below are enlargements of the spindle (with its hook) and the round spindle-whorl; the latter makes the spindle revolve like a top, and thus gives the twist to the "roving" of wool.

FIG. 25.—A distaff of the early 17th century fixed on a stand, to free the spinner's hands and arms.
(*From a picture circ.* 1600 A.D.)

in the primitive hand industry the "shed" has been formed, the weaver passes through from his right hand to his left the shuttle containing the weft, which thus goes over and under the warp-threads across the width of the material. Then, raising one foot treadle and lowering the other, he makes a second "shed" in which the threads which were below are

raised and the threads which were above are lowered; and he then passes the shuttle back from the left hand to the right. The two rows of cross-weaving are then made firm and tight by drawing the "reed," which is a wooden frame fitted with vertical wires, firmly against the newly-woven

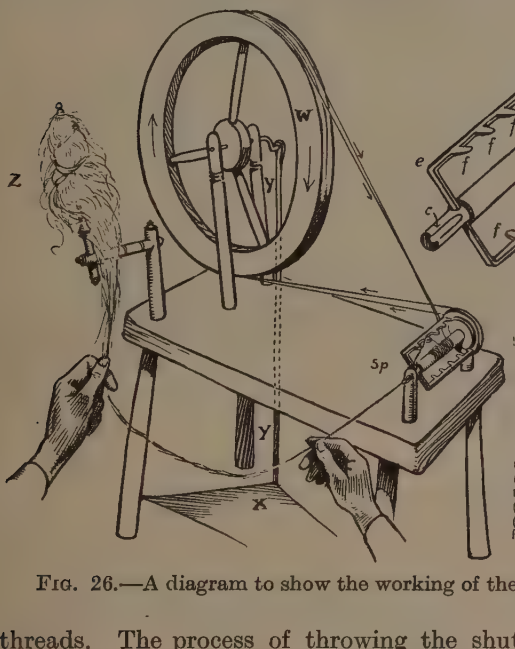

Z
W
Y
Sp
Y
X
A
a
b
c
d
e
f
Z = Distaff holding unspun wool.
SP = Spindle with flyer, bobbin and small wheels [see enlargement A].
W = Driving wheel with two grooves connected by two cords with the two small wheels on the spindle.
X = Treadle to work wheel.
Y = Crank to connect X with W
A = Enlarged view of spindle with bobbin and flyer.
(a) & (b) = two small grooved wheels revolving at different rates.
(c) = Spindle fixed to axle of wheel (a) and grooved at one end for wool to pass through
(d) Bobbin, a hollow axle attached to wheel (b) Spindle passes inside it
(e) = Flyer
(f) = The lecks or projections on the flyer.

FIG. 26.—A diagram to show the working of the spinning-wheel.

threads. The process of throwing the shuttle from right to left and from left to right is then repeated.

In the old hand industry the loom held, as a rule, a single width of cloth of 27 inches; this distance was as much as the weaver could easily stretch in throwing the shuttle across from one hand to the other. To weave double-width cloth two men had to co-operate. After weaving there were still such processes as fulling, dyeing or bleaching, and finishing.

In certain parts of the country, in the early 17th century,

almost all these processes, with the exception of fulling, were effected in the weaver's own home; his wife and family did the carding and spinning, and he did the weaving, bleaching, and dyeing. This was frequently the case, for example, in Lancashire and in the West Riding of Yorkshire. In Devon-

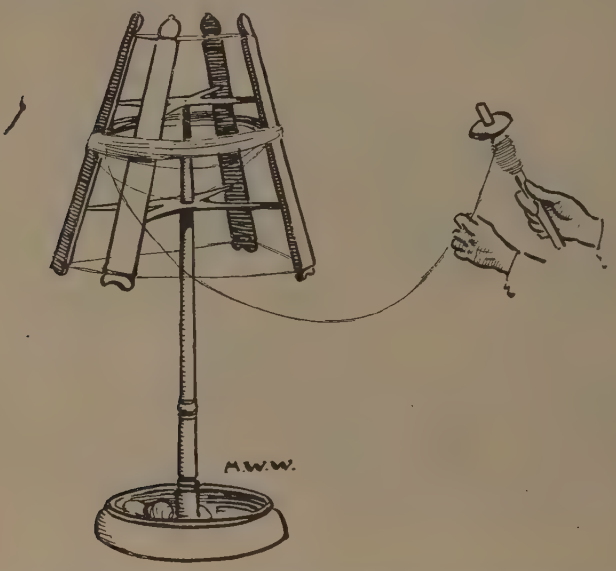


FIG. 27.—The winder (used after spinning with the distaff or wheel) to wind the yarn off the spindle and make it up into hanks ready for weaving, or for knitting.

shire, on the other hand, there was in the early 17th century a minute subdivision of labour amongst the various different households of handicraftsmen. For example, we read in Westcott's "Account of Devonshire," written in 1630—

"First the gentleman farmer or husbandman sends his wool to the market, which is bought either by the comber* or spinster, and they the next week bring it thither again in yarn, which the weaver buys; and the market following brings that thither again in cloth;

* "*Combing*" *is a variation of* "*Carding*" *used for long-fibred wools.*

where it is sold either to the clothier* (who sends it to London) or to the merchant who (after it hath passed the fuller's mill, and sometimes the dyer's vat) transports it. The large quantities whereof cannot be well guessed at, but best known to the custom-book."

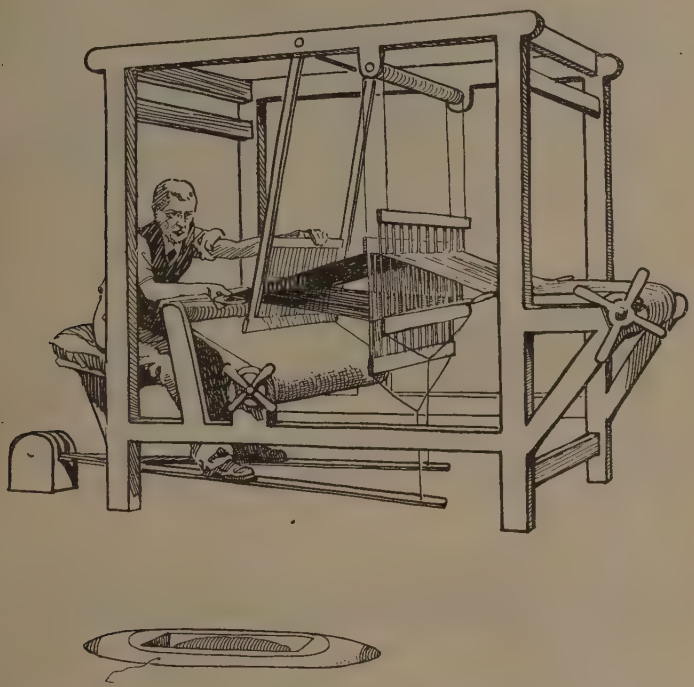


Fig. 28.—Picture of weaver at work on the hand-loom. The weaver has just passed the shuttle from left to right and is now drawing the weft tight by the "reed," which he holds in his left hand. He holds the shuttle ready for the next throw in his right hand. Below is an enlargement of the shuttle containing the yarn for the "weft."

In the early 17th century the number of those who were completely their own masters was probably fairly large. But

** The word "Clothier" has a varied meaning in different parts of the country at this period. Here it means the inland trader as distinguished from the foreign merchant. In the West Riding of Yorkshire, on the other hand, the term was usually applied to the small working manufacturer.*

as the century progressed there was a tendency for domestic

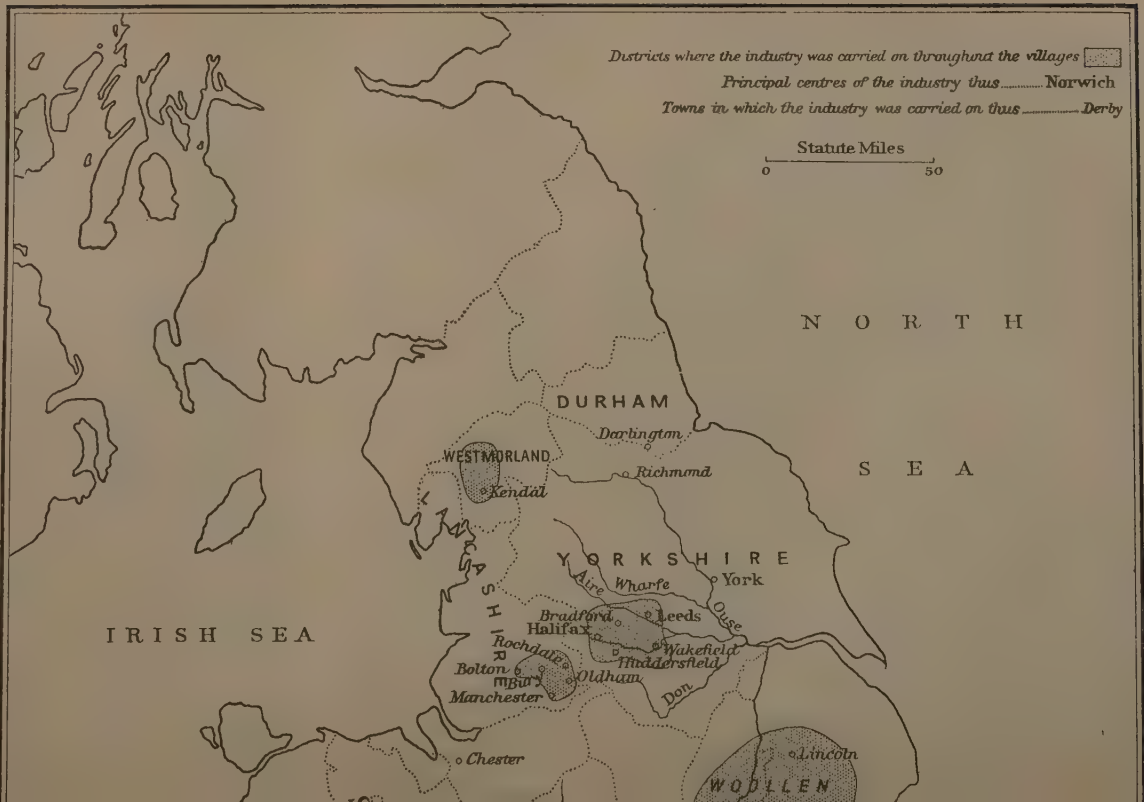
FIG. 29.—"The Industrious Apprentice." In the foreground is the Trader in his counting-house, with his young apprentice. On the left, a porter carries in bales of cloth. Behind is the trader's workshop, in which two people can be seen spinning, and five others are at the loom.

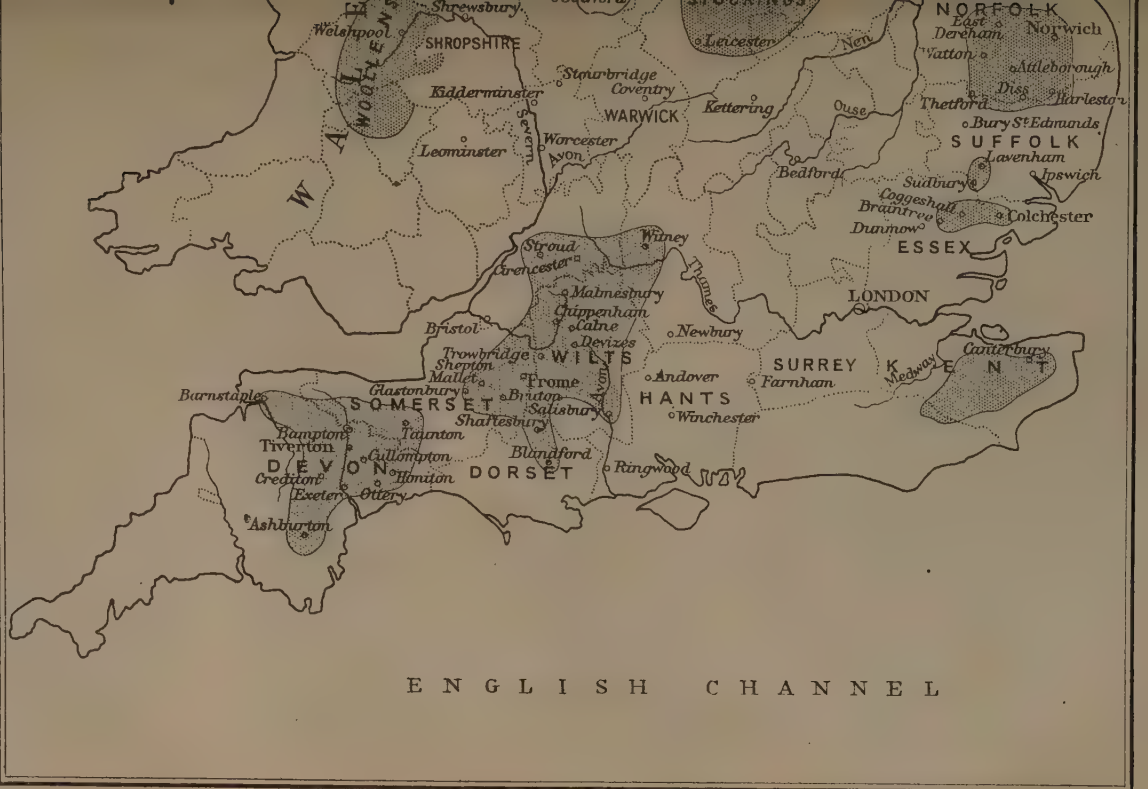
workers to become the wage-paid employees of masters. This was due to the extension of trade, and the consequent

increased demand for cloth. In the first place, the supplies of raw wool which farmers from the countryside near the wool-manufacturing villages brought to the markets proved insufficient. A small working weaver would often arrive at market to find the wool all sold. When this happened the clothier or inland trader who had hitherto bought the weaver's cloth naturally grew anxious. He knew the counties where more raw wool could be got; he already had drivers and pack-horses tramping the inland roads to sell the cloth. He began, therefore, also to buy up supplies of raw wool. This development placed many domestic workers in the power of the clothiers, for the latter could refuse to sell them the raw material, and could offer instead to give wages for work done on it.

The districts in which woollen manufacture was carried on in the 17th century were widely spread, both in towns and villages, wherever raw wool was readily to be had, and the transport of the finished goods was easy. Certain districts, however, had marked advantages. In the eastern counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, and Kent, thousands of skilled Flemish and Dutch weavers had settled in the reign of Elizabeth, driven from the Netherlands by the persecutions of Philip II. of Spain. They had settled in Norwich, Colchester, Maidstone, Canterbury, and other places, as well as in London. At the end of the 17th century, also, there came to Lavenham in Suffolk, to Canterbury, and to other places, Huguenots or Protestants from France, when the Edict of Nantes was revoked.* All these foreigners were skilled craftsmen, and they taught the natives better and finer methods of manufacture. These eastern counties got their supplies of wool from Stourbridge Fair, and from the sheep which fed on the Lincolnshire Wolds, on the sandy sheep-lands of West Norfolk,

* *See Chap. VI., p.* 112.


Districts where the industry was carried on throughout the villages
Principal centres of the industry thus ..... Norwich
Towns in which the industry was carried on thus ..... Derby
Statute Miles
0
50
NORTH
SEA
IRISH SEA
DURHAM
Darlington
Richmond
WESTMORLAND
Kendal
LANCASHIRE
YORKSHIRE
York
Aire
Wharfe
Ouse
Bradford
Leeds
Halifax
Wakefield
Huddersfield
Rochdale
Bolton
Bury
Oldham
Manchester
Don
Chester
Lincoln
WOOLLEN



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and in Kent on the North Downs. By river and coast the traders easily sent the finished goods to the famous market at Blackwell Hall in the City of London, or shipped them abroad. By Defoe's time the woollen industry in Kent was perishing, but it was more vigorous than ever in Norfolk and Suffolk. He gives the following account of the district round Norwich, where the people were working for employers, sometimes in their own homes, but sometimes in small workshops :—

"When we come to Norfolk, we see a Face of Diligence spread over the whole Country ; the vast manufacture carried on (in chief) by the Norwich Weavers, employs all the country round in spinning Yarn for them, besides many thousand Packs of Yarn which they receive from other Countries, even from as far as Yorkshire, and Westmoreland, of which I shall speak in its Place. This side of Norfolk is very populous, and throng'd with great and spacious Market-Towns more and larger than any other part of England so far from London, except Devonshire, and the West-riding of Yorkshire . . . ; but that which is most remarkable is that the whole Country round them is so interspers'd with Villages, and those Villages so large, and so full of People, that they are equal to Market-Towns in other Countries. . . . As I pass'd this part of the Country in the Year 1723, the Manufacturers assured me that there was not in all the Eastern and Middle part of Norfolk, any Hand unemploy'd if they would Work ; and that the very Children after four or five Years of Age, could every one earn their own Bread. . . .

"Norwich is the Capital of all the County, and Centre of all the Trade and Manufactures which I have just mention'd ; an ancient, large, rich, and populous City. If a Stranger was only to ride through or view the City of Norwich for a Day, he would have much more Reason to think there was a Town without Inhabitants than there is really to say so of Ipswich ; but on the contrary, if he was to view the City, either on a Sabbath-day, or on any public Occasion, he would wonder where all the People could dwell, the Multitude is so great. But the case is this ; the Inhabitants being all busy at their Manufactures, dwell in their Garrets at their Looms, and in their Combing-shops, so they call them, Twisting-Mills, and other Work-Houses ; almost all the Works they are employed in, being done within Doors."

A second favoured region was that of the south-west. From western Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire, and southern Gloucestershire, to the eastern part of Somersetshire and the north of Dorsetshire the towns and villages were seats of busy work; while in Devonshire, the towns of Tiverton, Taunton and Exeter were surrounded with similar villages. The vast

flocks of sheep which fed on Salisbury Plain, on the Dorsetshire Downs, on the Cotswolds and Mendips, and on Exmoor and Dartmoor at first fully supplied this district. As time went on wool began to be brought from the Midlands by the travelling dealers to a weekly market at Cirencester ; great supplies were conveyed also to the little coast ports from Ireland.* Export was easy from Bristol, Exeter, Barnstaple, and Bideford. From the weekly market at Exeter, in Defoe's day, goods were shipped to Portugal, Spain, Holland, and Italy. By that time the little independent manufacturers had largely died out in this district, and their descendants, through shortage of wool, had become the paid wage-earners of the master clothiers. They still worked, however, for the most part in their own homes and owned their own tools. This is Defoe's description—

> " These Towns are interspersed by a great number of Villages, . . . Hamlets, and scattered Houses, in which, generally speaking, the Spinning Work of all this Manufacture is performed by the poor People ; the Master Clothiers, who generally live in the greater Towns, sending out the Wool weekly to their Houses, by their Servants and Horses, and, at the same Time, bringing back the Yarn that they have spun and finished, which then is fitted for the Loom. . . . They told me at Bradford [Wilts.] that it was no extraordinary Thing to have Clothiers in that County worth, from Ten thousand, to Forty thousand Pounds a Man, and many of the great Families, who now pass for Gentry in those Counties, have been originally raised from, and built up by this truly noble Manufacture."

The third special region of wool manufacture lay in the North. Round Kendal, in Westmoreland, in South Lancashire, and in Western Yorkshire, the severe climate and barren soil of the hillsides had bred up a hardy people, accustomed to live largely on oaten-bread and cheese, who had taken to manufacture to supplement farming. The sheep of the Pennines supplied their wool, but these districts were as yet notorious for inferior and cheaper products. Lancashire produced fustians, a coarse mixture of cotton and wool ; while Fuller

* *See map, p. 74.*

in his "Worthies," published in 1662, has hard words to say of the quality of Yorkshire cloths—

> "As I am glad to hear that plenty of a coarser kind of cloth is made in this County, at Hallifax, Leeds and elsewhere, whereby the meaner sort are much employed, and the middle sort enriched, so I am sorry for the general complaints made thereof, insomuch that it is become a general bye-word 'to shrink as northern cloths' . . . to signify such, who fail their friends in deepest distress depending upon their assistance. Sad that the Sheep, the Emblem of Innocence, should unwillingly cover so much craft under the wool thereof; and sadder that Fullers, commended in Scripture for making cloth white, should justly be condemned for making their own consciences Black, by such fraudulent practices."

In these northern districts the difficulties of transport were great, and even in Defoe's day no great clothier-traders had yet arisen. Each little master-manufacturer bought his own wool, got it spun and woven in his own house, and himself took it to market on his own horse. We have from Defoe a vivid description of the life as he saw it in the hill-valleys of the parish of Halifax. This was in the 18th century, an immense district some 20 miles long, and 11 or 12 broad; it contained the small market-town of Halifax in the centre, and about 28 villages and hamlets scattered in the outlying valleys. As late as 1763 there were only 8579 houses in all, of which 1312 were in Halifax town. Except for abundant sheep pasture the region was naturally a difficult one for farmers. The climate was rigorous, and the only corn crop which ripened easily was oats. Many of the hillsides were so steep that instead of a plough a special type of spade was used for tillage. The air, however, was invigorating, and the district was blest with plentiful streams of swift-flowing water, and a supply of surface coal which was used for fuel. The result was that the people were early driven to take up the woollen manufacture as a bye-occupation with farming; in the 18th century each man farmed only three or four small enclosed pasture fields, sufficient to feed his horse, and enable him to

keep a cow so that his family might be supplied with milk and butter. A domestic worker like this was known in Yorkshire as a clothier, a name applied in the south-west to a trader.

Defoe approached Halifax from Rochdale in Lancashire by the wild pass over the Pennines called Blackstone Edge.

"After having passed the second Hill, and come down into the Valley again, and so still the nearer we came to Halifax, we found the Houses thicker, and the Villages greater in every Bottom; and not only so, but the Sides of the Hills, which were very steep every way, were spread with Houses, and that very thick; for the land being divided into small Enclosures, . . . every three or four Pieces of Land had a House belonging to it. . . . After we had mounted the third Hill, we found the Country, in short, one continued Village, tho' mountainous every way, as before; hardly a House standing out of a speaking distance from another, and . . . the Day clearing up, and the Sun shining, we could see that almost at every House there was a Tenter, and almost on every Tenter a piece of Cloth, or Kersie, or Shalloon, . . . from which the Sun glancing, and, as I may say, shining (the White reflecting its Rays to us), I thought it was the most agreeable Sight that I ever saw. . . . Wherever we passed any House we found a little Rill or Gutter of running Water; if the House was above the Road it came from it, and crossed the Way to run to another; if the House was below us, it crossed us from some other distant House above it; and at every considerable House was a Manufactory or Work-House, and as they could not do their Business without Water, the little Streams were so parted and guided by Gutters or Pipes . . . that none of those Houses were without a River . . . running into and through their Work-Houses. . . . Among the Manufacturers Houses are likewise scattered an infinite Number of Cottages or small Dwellings, in which dwell the Workmen which are employed, the Women and Children of whom, are always busy Carding, Spinning, etc. . . . ; hardly anything above four Years old, but its Hands are sufficient to itself. . . . If we knocked at the Door of any of the Master Manufacturers, we presently saw a House full of lusty Fellows, some at the Dye-vat, some dressing the Cloths, some in the Loom, some one thing, some another, all hard at work, and full employed upon the Manufacture, and all seeming to have sufficient Business."

At the end of the week each small clothier saddled his horse, and placing behind him his bale, or two bales of finished material rode down to Halifax Market.* After a twopenny meal at one of the inns of ale, porridge, and boiled beef, he rode home again, his cloth sold and the money in a bag at his

* *See Leeds Market described in the chapter on "Internal Trade," p.* 83.

saddle-bow. But at wool-clipping time he had often to ride further afield. His forefathers of the 16th and 17th centuries could buy raw wool enough at Halifax market, or purchase it at their own doors of the wool-drivers who collected it from farms in the Pennines and Yorkshire Wolds.* With the expansion of industry, the 18th century working clothier had often to ride far into Lincolnshire, or Leicestershire or other wool-clipping districts, where he bought up a year's supply. Early in the 18th century his wife, daughters, and surrounding cottagers were able to spin all that he needed. But as that century wore on and the industry grew he had to set additional spinners to work, and therefore we read of him riding off "in huge wig and cocked hat," with his raw wool behind him to the remote valleys of Northern Yorkshire. An old Yorkshireman of ninety years, who was still alive about 1830, remembered how, in his youth, "the women and children . . . flocked on sunny days, with their spinning wheels, to some favourite pleasant spot to pursue the labours of the day." He added that they gossipped.

Very like the Yorkshire industry was that of South Lancashire. Throughout the 17th and early 18th centuries the homely kitchens of little grey-stone farms of Rossendale, Rochdale, Burnley, and the outlying hamlets heard the clack-clack of the flung shuttle, and the whirr of the spinning wheel, while in the busy intervals of work cows were milked and driven to pasture, hens were fed, butter was churned, oats were sown and harvested. Week by week the cloth was taken on horseback over the rough hill-paths of the Pennines to Leeds, the great cloth market of the North.

* *Compare the account of Henry Best, p. 53, Chap. II.*

II. The Iron Industry

In the 17th and 18th centuries the manufacture of iron in England was unimportant compared with its position to-day. Timber was then the indispensable raw material for the building of ships and of houses, the making of farm tools, the construction of spinning-wheels, looms, and other manufacturing implements, and for other purposes for which we use iron or steel. Iron was then chiefly used for cannon and musket barrels, for cutlery of various kinds, from swords and knives to ploughshares, and for small articles of hardware, such as nails, bolts and chains, bits and horse-shoes, keys and locks. The slow development of this industry was due, first and foremost, to the fact that iron, except in small quantities, is heavy and difficult to convey when inland communications are bad. Secondly, our modern iron industry is dependent upon coal for the coke with which smelting is carried on, and until coal-mining developed on a large scale smelting by coke was debarred.

During one period the iron was smelted by means of charcoal, and not by coke. A steady disappearance of woods and forests resulted. The timber was needed for ships, and an Act of Parliament of Elizabeth's reign laid down that only the tops and underwood of the oak might be used for charcoal. Hence the supply steadily decreased. The wood was cut into pieces, and piled into conical stacks with a stake in the middle. Each stack was covered with straw or stubble, and then smeared with damp sand or earth. A hole was left at the top to admit the fire, and vent-holes were left at the sides for smoke. When fired, the hole at the top was closed, and the pile was left to smoulder for six or seven days. Six loads of wood made only one load of charcoal. The charcoal was sold by the burners to the iron masters of the neighbourhood as fuel to smelt their ore.

The process of mining for iron-ore in this period was carried on by small people. In the Weald, yeomen and gentlemen alike combined mining with farming; tenants often rented land above and below the surface, and every ploughman could also wield a pick. The ore was dug either from surface quarries or from small bell-shaped pits descending 20 or 30 feet below the surface. In the Forest of Dean there were similar mining methods, but most of the land was there owned by the Crown; therefore, by long custom, any working miner had been allowed to stake out a claim to a particular section. Provided he paid a royalty to a Crown official who lived in the forest, the claimant could not be encroached upon by any other miner within the distance to which he could fling the refuse when standing at the top of his shaft.

The iron miner, like the charcoal burner, sold his material to the iron-master. Though iron-ore is widely diffused in Great Britain, it was useless in those days of bad transport to mine it except in forest districts where charcoal was easily available or in places where peat could be used in its place. There were in the 17th century five iron-smelting districts: these were, first the Weald of Sussex, Surrey, and Kent, second the Forest of Dean, third the West Midland counties of Staffordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Warwickshire, fourth the Furness district of North Lancashire, and lastly the Pennine district round Sheffield.*

The most primitive method of extracting iron from ore, used by the ancient Britons, the Romans, the men of the Middle Ages, and even in Tudor times, was to heap ore and glowing charcoal in an open hearth formed in a hole in the ground, or in the side of a bank. The contents of the hearth

* *There were also small iron works in Northumberland, Cumberland and Durham.*

were kept at red heat by means of a bellows, and gradually the ore became soft. It then became possible with heavy hammers at the forge to beat out the impurities, and thus to produce wrought iron. The metal was never in a molten state. Only the richest ores containing 60 to 70 per cent. of iron could be used in this process, whereas modern iron-stone frequently contains as little as 20 per cent. of iron. This method of extraction was still in occasional use in Lancashire as late as 1675. A writer who had seen it says—

"It is very like a common blacksmith's, viz. a plain open hearth or bottom, without any enclosing walls, only where the nose of the bellows comes in through a wall there is a hollow place (which they call the furnace) made of iron plates, as is also that part of the hearth next adjoining. This hollow part they fill and heap up with charcoal and lay the ore (broken small) all round about the charcoal upon the flat hearth, to bake as it were or neal. . . . The glassy scoriæ runs very thin but the metal is never in a perfect fusion, but settles as it were in a clod, that they take it out with tongs and turn it under great hammers."

Already in the 17th century, however, the method of smelting in closed furnaces had been introduced, whereby the iron was reduced to molten condition. The method was in its broad principles exactly that which is used in the most advanced furnaces of to-day. The ore was first burned or calcined in a heap on the ground, between layers of charcoal or of turf. It was then put into a stone or brick furnace, usually built on a square-shaped foundation against the side of a hill, and about 18 to 30 feet high. The interior of this furnace is described by one 17th century writer as "an egg-shaped cavity." At the bottom was a hearth. The calcined ore, together with charcoal and limestone, were put in at the top of the furnace, the hillside making it easy to wheel trucks thither. It took about three weeks to kindle the furnace. It was kept alight by two large bellows, about $7\frac{1}{2}$ yards long, the noses of which met at a little hole near the bottom of the

furnace, so that a continuous stream of air played on the closed hearth. These bellows were usually worked by a water-wheel, and in districts like the Weald, which were deficient in natural water-power, dams were constructed and trenches made to secure an artificial fall of water. Inside the furnace the heat from the glowing charcoal gradually heated the ore and separated the constituent elements of both ore and limestone. The metal was thus separated from the dross. Part of the latter combined with parts of the limestone to form a new substance known as slag. As this process took place the pure iron, being the heaviest, sank to the bottom of the hearth in a seething mass, while the liquid slag floated on the surface of the iron. From the top of the furnace leapt golden, orange, red and yellow tongues of flame as the burning charcoal escaped in gas, and brightly shining sparks of matter floated upwards in tiny glowing fragments. About once in 12 hours the furnace was ready to be tapped. The liquid slag was drawn off; the molten iron was released from the bottom of the hearth by workmen, who broke away a lump of clay with which a small hole near the bottom had been blocked. A sand mould, composed of a main channel, and side channels, had been prepared on

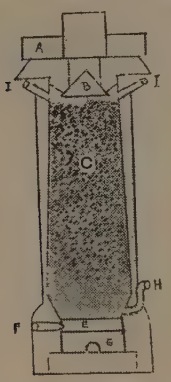

FIG. 30.—Section of modern blast furnace

A. Platform from which the iron-stone, coke, and limestone are thrown down on to the bell.
*B. Bell, which can be lowered to let iron-stone, coke, and lime-stone fall into the furnace.
C. Iron-stone, limestone, and coke in furnace slowly sinking.
E. Liquid slag.
F. Pipe for slag to flow out.
G. Liquid iron.
H. Pipe for blast of hot air to rush into furnace.
*I. Pipe for gas to escape.

* *There was no bell to close the top, and no escape pipe in the 17th century.*

the ground in front of the furnace. Into this the fiery stream leapt as it issued from the hearth, forming, as the workmen said, "a sow" of iron with its "pigs"; they separated the sow and pigs while the metal was still soft. In 1717, at a furnace in Lancashire, they tapped 16 or 17 cwt. of iron at a time; in 1721 they took 22 cwt. The above account, based on contemporary descriptions, shows that the enormous iron-bound blast-furnace of the present day, 100 feet high, and with a vast interior capacity, is merely an elaboration of the 17th century type.

The molten iron from a blast furnace is still formed in sand moulds into "sows" and "pigs," and is known as pig-iron.* The old iron-masters found it to be much harder but much more brittle than the wrought-iron of the older process. It was, they discovered, lacking in flexibility; it would make a good cannon ball, but if used for a door-bolt and chain, or a horse's bit, it would easily snap. We know now that this is due to carbon mixed with the iron. Therefore, though pig-iron could be melted and cast into moulds for cannon and cannon-balls, and for firebacks of quaint design, for many purposes it had to be carried to the forge, and turned into wrought-iron. Close by the iron furnaces, therefore, there were always the forges; here the pig-iron was made red-hot, and wrought again and again under vast hammers worked by water-wheels, till the oxygen from the bellows had carried away the carbon

* *Pig-iron was and is raw material for three classes of goods :—*

(a) *Cast-iron goods. Cast-iron contains impurities including* 3 *or* 4 *per cent. of carbon and other things which make it hard, but brittle and unfit or tension.*

(b) *Malleable or wrought-iron goods From these the carbon was formerly expelled by carrying the pig-iron to a forge, and exposing it when red-hot to a blast of air containing oxygen. It was then beaten with a huge hammer. Wrought-iron is less hard than cast-iron, but will bear tension.*

(c) *Steel goods. These combine the hardness of cast-iron with the flexibility of wrought-iron. Steel is very pure iron mixed with* $\frac{1}{4}$ *per cent. to* $2\frac{1}{2}$ *per cent. of carbon.*

and left the iron flexible and strong. Those who now cross the silent heather-clad hills of the Sussex Weald, and wander through the surviving woods of its old forests, may still trace through the heather of the moorland, and the bracken of the woods, the dried up trenches made in old days to carry every tiny stream of water to the forge. They may picture it in 1591 in the days when old Camden wrote his "Britannia"—

> "Sussex is full of iron mines everywhere, for the casting of which there are furnaces up and down the country, and abundance of wood is yearly spent; many streams of water are drawn into one channel, and a great deal of meadow ground is turned into pools for the driving of mills by the flashes [= weirs], which, beating with hammers upon the iron, fill the neighbourhood night and day with their noise."

From the point of view of world-trade, the most rapidly extending branch of the iron industry in this period was probably that of Sheffield, a district including both the town itself and its vast surrounding parish of villages and hamlets which was known as Hallamshire. Here the climate resembled that of Halifax; there was plentiful water-power, and a supply of iron ore, the result was that a thriving industry was carried on by poor but hard-working domestic cutlers who were their own masters. The only rich men in the district were the owners of the furnaces and forges for preparing the iron. In their own homes, with the help of their children, and an apprentice apiece, the little master-cutlers made knives, sickles, blades, and scissors. Not only in the towns and in the villages, but in hillside farms, at the end of every barn, the cutler's workshop was found. Down by the streams the lord of the manor owned the grindstones, driven by water-power, at which the cutlers sharpened their blades. The air was full of the sound of the hammers at the forges, of the groaning of water-wheels, of the hiss of the grindstones. Near by were wild hillsides and moors, where craftsmen and apprentices on leisure days hunted on foot for game. At the beginning of the 17th

century the master-cutlers were too poor to ride to distant fairs and markets ; the wares were bought by dealers and sent to the little port of Bawtry on the Idle.* But during the 17th century the population of the town of Sheffield more than doubled ; London merchants sent agents to live there, and a weekly train of pack-horses set off to carry the goods to the metropolis. Some of the small master-craftsmen even ventured on their own account to visit Bristol, Chester, and other fairs. Early in the 18th century stage-waggons were introduced, and between 1721 and 1732 the river Don was made navigable to within 2 miles of the town. But throughout the period the Sheffield cutlery industry remained in the hands of small master-craftsmen, working in their own houses, selling direct to merchants and traders, and leading a semi-rural life.

III. Coal-Mining

No further development in the iron industry was possible until coke made from coal could be used in place of charcoal. Coal-mining must first be improved, and the process of smelting with coke must be developed.

The earliest notices of coal-mines in Britain occur in the 12th century. Many of these, however, were probably only holes or quarries in the sides of hills, at which any man with a pick could procure surface coal. The first actual pits were made by sinking a vertical shaft till a coal-seam was reached fairly near the surface. Writing in Charles II.'s reign, Dud Dudley, a famous iron-master of the 17th century, speaks of coal-pits "from 8 to 20 yards deep and some near 20 fathoms † deep." The coal was raised to the surface by a hand windlass, and if the pit was near a hillside, water was allowed to escape by a horizontal shaft.

* *See map of river and coast trade.*

† 20 *fathoms* = 120 *feet. The Pendleton mine near Manchester in* 1904 *was* 3483 *feet deep.*

In the districts where coal was found near the surface it was early burned for fuel, but it only gradually came into general use in London and elsewhere and was for long known as sea-coal. Even in James I.'s reign amongst people of fashion there was prejudice against it, as we learn from the remark in 1631—

"Within 30 years last the nice [= dainty] dames of London would not come into any house or room where sea-coals were burned, nor willingly eat of the meat that was either sod or roasted with sea-coal fire."

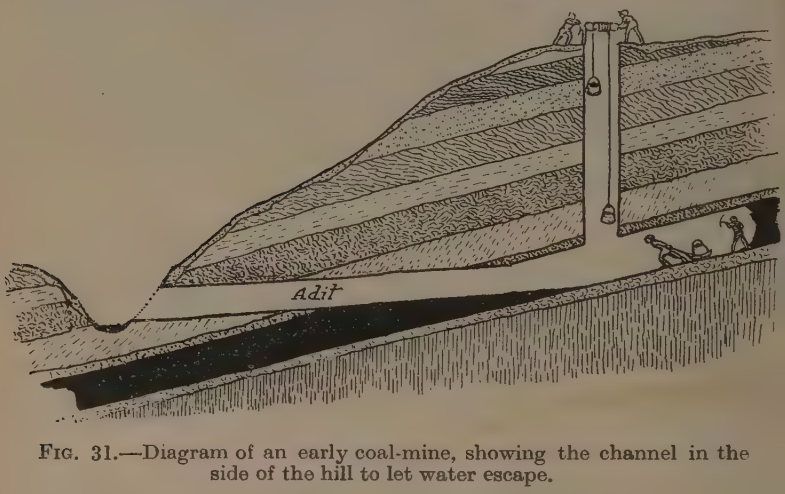

FIG. 31.—Diagram of an early coal-mine, showing the channel in the side of the hill to let water escape.

As necessity drove the miners to dig deeper into the earth two great difficulties arose: first, water poured into the pits, and though hand and foot pumps, and even chains of buckets worked by horse-power, were applied, these proved inadequate to remove it; and, secondly, noxious gases made the miner's life a danger. A writer in 1750 says—

"We crossed the moors towards Wigan and came to the Canal Coal Pits; theytold me they were 40 yards deep. The work is called a delft or mine, the vein about 3 feet thick. The water is pumped up and goes off by a channel on that side of the hill. . . . They are much

troubled by what they call fiery air. They know when it rises by the smell, and send down a person with a candle to try it; if it is dangerous they see a blaze from the candle near half a foot long. One man was burnt with it that he died, and it raised blisters on his body. When it is very bad, they let down a candle by a rope to set fire to the fiery damp as they call it. . . . When first they open a pit they let down a round iron grate full of fire to draw out the damp by setting it on fire. The people are let down to the work by a rope."

Another writer, speaking of an explosion which took place about 1719 near Newcastle, says—

"Seventy men were all blown out of the one pit at once by the violence of the blast, miserably maimed and mangled, some of them at the distance of an hundred yards from the pit's mouth."

In developing these coal-pits, therefore, there was need of the moneyed man; it was a risky adventure to dig for the coal, sink a shaft, supply apparatus for pumping, and waggons for cartage, and then perhaps strike a seam of little value. Only where transport was easy, moreover, was the adventure worth the risk, and thus it was only in the Newcastle district that coal-pits were dug to any large extent during this period. Here the estuary of the Tyne made it easy to convey the coal by horse-waggon to the "staiths" or wharves on the water-side, and here, in the 17th century, the earliest wooden railroads were constructed to enable the horses to draw the heavy waggons. The difficulties of pumping, moreover, increased as the mines deepened, and also those of haulage.

During the whole period from 1600 to 1760 the iron industry was hampered by the fact that the supply of charcoal for smelting was running short. Even in Elizabeth's reign the forests, though still of considerable extent, were beginning to dwindle with a rapidity which caused alarm to the Queen and her Council, lest timber for shipbuilding should fail; and laws were therefore passed in her reign prohibiting the felling for smelting purposes of any tree which was 1 foot square at the base, and forbidding also the erection of any

fresh ironworks in the Weald. Yet the destruction of timber went on. A writer in 1629 said—

> "There is one man whose dwelling place is within twenty miles of the cittye of Durhame, which hath brought to the grounde, above 30,000 oakes in his life tyme."

After the Restoration, in 1674, all the royal ironworks in the Forest of Dean were demolished, and only those which were outside the forest limits were left. With the diminution of wood the Sussex industry decayed. In the early 17th century there were said to be 140 furnaces and forges in the county; by 1740 there were only 10; by 1788 only 2; and the last furnace blew out between 1820 and 1830. By 1740 there were only 59 furnaces left in all England, and the bulk of the pig-iron used in the country was imported from Sweden, with a little from Flanders and Spain and Ireland, and after 1750 from our North American colonies. The very existence of the iron industry in Britain was thus in imminent peril; yet in the near future the industrial development of the country was to depend largely upon iron. Unless coal could be obtained in large quantities, and could be used as a substitute for wood in smelting iron, Britain must remain handicapped by reliance on foreign countries for her supplies of this indispensable commodity.

Two inventions, however, before the period closed, were preparing the way for the restoration of the British iron industry. One was the application by a Dartmouth blacksmith of steam-power to pumping in coal-mines. The other was the employment by a Shropshire ironmaster of coke for smelting iron.

It was in 1705 that Newcomen, the blacksmith, invented the steam-pump. It worked on the same principle as does the rising and falling lid of a kettle. The force of steam drives up the kettle lid; the weight of the atmosphere makes

it fall again. In place of the kettle Newcomen had a strong cylinder, from the inside of which all air was excluded, and instead of a lid he had a well-fitting circular plate of metal, the piston. Attached to this was a connecting rod, joined to

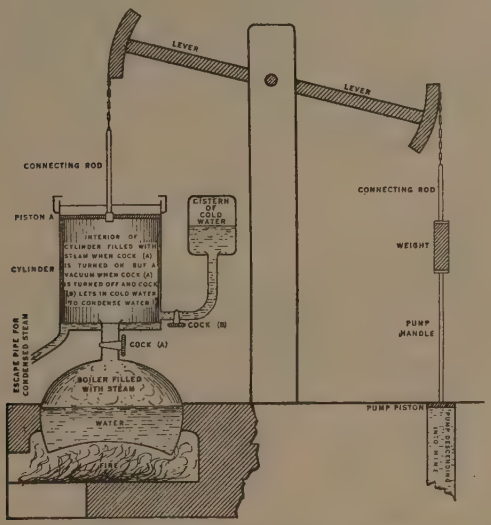

Fig. 32.—Diagram to show the working of Newcomen's pump.

When cock "A" is turned on and cock "B" is turned off, the steam in the cylinder drives up the piston; this raises one end of the lever, and the weight at the other end is enabled to act, and to drive down the piston of the pump. When cock "B" is turned on and cock "A" is turned off, cold water comes in and condenses the steam in the cylinder, leaving a vacuum. Then the weight of the atmosphere outside pressing down on the piston "A," drives it downwards; this raises the other end of the lever, and so draws up the pump piston. The steam thus admitted or withheld from the cylinder, combined with the weight of the atmosphere, and the weight above the pump handle produces the upward and downward pump motion.

a lever; the other end of the lever was attached to a weight, below which was the handle of the pump. Beneath the cylinder, and connected with it by a pipe with a cock, was the boiler. When the cock was turned on, and the steam poured into the cylinder, the piston rose, and consequently the pump

handle assisted also by the weight above it, was driven downwards. The cock was then turned off, and by turning on another cock the cylinder was suddenly sprinkled with cold water. The temperature was thus reduced from 212 degrees to 100 degrees, and this condensed the steam. A vacuum was thus produced within the cylinder, and the weight of the atmosphere pressing upon the top of the piston drove it violently downwards. This raised the handle of the pump.

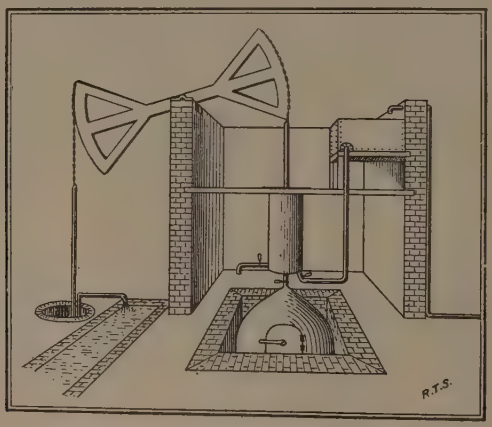

FIG. 33.—Picture of Newcomen's engine at work.

The process was repeated about seven times in a minute, a small boy being put in charge of the cocks. The process was an extravagant one, owing to the constant cooling and heating of the cylinder, but the pump was found to work.

The moneyed man was needed to perfect Newcomen's invention and put it on the market. In 1711 the "Company of the proprietors of the invention for raising water by fire" was formed. They had purchased Newcomen's invention. Improvements were introduced, and by 1720 the machine was made practically useful. It was applied to many purposes, and

was gradually introduced into the coal-mines of the Newcastle district, where it increased the output of coal.

The application of coke to iron-smelting was due to Abraham Darby. Its real influence, however, came with the following period, and the account is reserved to a later volume.

Book List

Author.	Book.	Publisher.
Clapham, J. H. ..	The Woollen and Worsted Industries	*Methuen.*
Boyd, R. N. ..	Coal-pits and Pitmen	*Whittaker & Co.*
Galloway	History of Coal Mining ..	*Colliery Guardian Co.*
Smiles, Samuel ..	Industrial Biography .. .. (Iron Industry)	*Murray.*
Cunningham, W.	Alien Immigrants to England ..	*Sonnenschein*
Mantoux, P. ..	La Révolution Industrielle au XVIIIe Siècle	(*Paris.*)
Defoe, D. ..	Tour through the whole Island of Great Britain, 1724–27	[*Not republished since the 18th century.*]
Page. (Ed.) ..	Victoria County Histories (articles on industry for various counties)	*Constable.*

CHAPTER VIII

TOWN LIFE (1600–1760)

In the 17th and early 18th centuries there still flourished in England most of the old cities and boroughs of the Middle Ages. There also were growing up new towns to compete in importance with the ancient ones.

In the towns of this period, both old and new, there was much to recall the past. In the ancient fortified boroughs, though town ditches were filling up, and walls were crumbling, and though suburbs were growing up outside the old walled areas, the gates still stood firm, and within the limits of the medieval boroughs many ancient rights and customs still lingered. Most towns, moreover, still had common pastures, where the cows and sheep of the citizens grazed, as at Coventry, Oxford, Nottingham, Newcastle, Southampton, and other places. Some had common hay-meadows, and even, as at Cambridge, great stretches of open arable fields. Thus farmyard sights and sound were still familiar in many 17th century towns.

Within the gates and walls of the ancient fortified boroughs there were, as of old, many narrow streets, side by side with wide spaces on which stood great houses of merchants and gentlemen, and even sometimes of peers. Of London before the Great Fire, Defoe wrote—

"The Streets were not only narrow, and the Houses all built of Timber, Lath, and Plaister. . . . But the Manner of Building in

those Days, one Story projecting out beyond another, was such that in some narrow Streets, the Houses almost touch'd one another at the Top, and it has been known, that Men, in case of Fire, have escaped on the Tops of the Houses, by leaping from one Side of a Street to another; this made it often and almost always happen, that if a House was on Fire, the opposite House was in more danger to be fired by it, according as the Wind stood, than the Houses next adjoining

Fig. 34.—The "Duke of Sully's House," still standing in Westminster in 1790: an example of the old gabled timber-framed house of the 16th century.

(From Smith's "Antiquities of Westminster."

on either Side. . . . But tho' by the New Buildings after the Fire, much Ground was given up, and left unbuilt, to inlarge the Streets, yet 'tis to be observed, that the Old Houses stood severally upon more Ground, were much larger upon the Flat, and in many Places, Gardens, and large Yards about them, all which, in the New Buildings, are, at least, contracted, and the Ground generally built up into other Houses, so that . . . there are many more Houses built than stood before upon the same Ground."

Though the fire cleared a portion of London of many

streets of such houses, in the unburned regions they lingered on far into the 19th century. They are to be found in some

FIG. 35.—A late 16th century house in Fore Street, Ipswich, built in 1588, of timber framework, plastered over. The window in the gable has iron lattice-work, and tiny diamond panes. The semi-circular arches over two of the windows are not Gothic, and show transition to the 17th century or Renaissance style, which was influenced by buildings in Italy.

old provincial towns to this day. Of Coventry in the early 18th century, Defoe writes—

"The Buildings are very old, and in some Places much decay'd; the City may be taken for the very Picture of the City of *London* on the *South* Side of *Cheapside* before the great Fire, the Timber-built Houses, projecting forwards and towards one another, till in the narrow Streets they were ready to touch one another at the Top."

Bristol again was so crowded even in the 18th century that even the busiest streets were on an average less than 20 feet wide, and wheeled coaches and carts could not enter the city at all; sledges drawn by horses and trucks drawn by dogs carried the wares. Even bridges were still used for

Fig. 36.—"Crown House," Newport, Essex, dated over the doorway 1692. It is timber-framed, but covered outside with beautifully ornamented plaster. The shell-hooded doorway is typical of the Renaissance style of this period.

buildings, and those of London and Newcastle had on them each a continuous street of houses.

In walking the streets of London or other old towns we can know the houses built in the 17th century by their style of architecture. The older English town houses

FIG. 37.—Brick houses in Catherine Court, Tower Hill, London, built after the Great Fire of 1666. They have sashed windows, and the only ornament outside is supplied by, first, the deep cornice above; second, the fine doorways; and, third, the wrought-iron work. The street was a mere lane, but the houses were beautiful within. (They have now been pulled down.)

had been built for centuries with timber frameworks, filled in with lath and plaster, and with high-pitched roofs whose gabled ends fronted the streets. The plan in each town was a traditional one, treasured by the Builders' Gild of the place, and consisted originally of a hall in which every one lived ; to this separate rooms had gradually been added, till in the early 17th century the hall had shrunk to a mere entrance passage. The detail of the work with all its irregular beauty was left to the happy instinct of each carpenter, plumber, plasterer, or other skilled craftsman who had a hand in the work.* Houses like this were still being built in London in James I.'s reign, and later in other places. House-building, like music, was in those days thoroughly English.

But a change in style had already appeared in some of the great new country houses of Elizabeth's reign. It was the result of the imitation of Italian ways of building by individual architects, who began to make drawings or designs for houses, and saw to it that the individual craftsmen followed their plans. In the 17th century the new ideas came into the towns, now here, now there. The new style first appeared in London about 1620. The architects began to dislike what John Evelyn called the " Gothick rudeness " of the older dwellings. The new houses were often built of small red bricks.† Windows, doors, and roofs were all balanced and in good proportion. In some houses gables were used for a while, but now merely for ornament ; in others they disappeared, and simple roofs of red tiles sometimes broken by dormer windows fronted the street. Very dignified in their quiet beauty are many of these 17th century houses. About the time of William III. the windows changed. The older houses had had casement

* *See Fig.* 34.

† *It is difficult to date the changes, because they came in gradually, first in the houses for the well-to-do, and then in those for the middle class. Cottages in the country were built in the olden style at a much later date.*

windows, with leaded diamond panes, and stone mullions separating the parts. Now some unknown person invented sash windows, which were filled with oblong panes of glass,

FIG. 38.—A wrought-iron gateway of the 18th century at Woodbridge, Suffolk.

some 12 by 8 inches in measurement. The house-fronts looked even simpler in consequence.

The 18th century houses of London streets and squares are quiet and austere. Over the main front-door, however, in the houses where well-to-do people lived, beautiful details were added to the plain frontage. At this street entrance,

too, wrought-iron holders for lamps, and sometimes even whole gateways of ironwork were erected. These, with the extinguishers for torches, are still to be seen in old towns.

FIG. 39.—A 16th century open fireplace with "linen-pattern" wood panelling above. A 17th century iron fire-basket has been placed in it, probably in order to burn coals.

Inside, at the beginning of the period, the older houses still had walls hung with the tapestries behind which Falstaff could hide. Gradually, however, they were removed, and in houses old and new the walls were covered from floor to ceiling with panels of shining oak. The old open fireplaces, with their chimney-corners, too, gradually disappeared as coals

came into use. First the " dogs " to hold wood were replaced by movable " fire-baskets " of wrought iron; next the chimneys were closed in, and fixed fire-grates were built. But in all houses, even the newly-built, the chimneys had to be big enough for the little sweep-boys to climb.

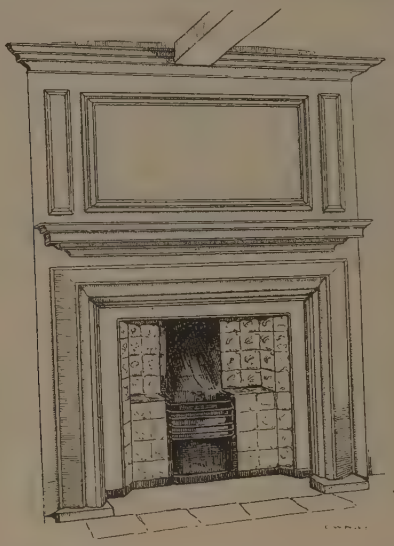

Fig. 40.—A late 17th century, or early 18th century bedroom fireplace. It shows the fixed fire-grate, with the original Dutch tiles on either side. The plain wooden panelling above is of 17th century type.

Another feature of the time, in the houses of the wealthier townsfolk, was the beautiful wood-carving on staircases and doorways. The skilled wood-carver also did fine work on furniture—on dressers, corner-cupboards, settles, tables, chairs, and on the great four-post wooden bedsteads. At night houses were lighted by candles held in gleaming brass candlesticks, and windows were heavily shuttered with hinged oak panels, and barred across with iron.

In well-to-do households of this time manners, especially at the table, were very decorous. When forks came in from Italy, as they did in James I.'s reign, men no longer held

FIG. 41.—Carved staircase and doorway of a late 17th century house in Botolph Lane, London (now pulled down). It shows the interior of a house built after the Great Fire of 1666.

pieces of meat in their fingers in order to cut them with their knives, for—

"The Italians, and also most strangers that are commorant [*i.e* resident] in Italy, doe alwaies at their meals use a little forke when they cut their meate."

From an old Latin school book, "The Gate of the Latin Tongue Unlocked," written by Comenius, and published

with an English translation in 1656, we read the following account of a feast given by one townsman to others :—

"The meetings of towns-men at feasts are not to bee passed by, as far forth as they are instituted for neighbourly friendships sake. . . . The maker of the feast entertaineth the invited guests (for whom it is greater civility to come early than late,) with a friendly meeting, and bringing in : and when they have washed their hands over a bason out of an ewer, or over a wash-pot out of a pitcher, and wiped them with a clean towel, (it would bee uncivil to give them a foul one,) they sit down close together upon the stools or seats that are placed. . . . The Server neatly carveth and cutteth in pieces the dishes set upon the table : but the Taster tasteth the drinks beforehand, or drinketh the first Cup, which the guests pledge. . . . The first messes are spoon-meats (broaths, puddings, potched eggs, etc.) not to bee licked with the tongue thrust forth, but to bee supped with a spoon : the other meats are taken out with forks, and cut with knives held by the handles. . . . In the mean time drinking-vessels are brought out of the place where they are put up, and beeing rinsed, set upon a cupbord. . . . Then they quaff and the cups go round for the health of this man or that. . . . At last the platters are taken away, . . . and junkets and sweetmeats are brought : but yet pleasant discourses and witty conferences, are the chiefest part of delicate entertainment and merry feasting."

The life of the ordinary town-dweller of the 17th and early 18th centuries was connected to a large extent with the streets. Every householder in London City had to keep and repair the roadway in front of his house as far as the gutter, and to light it by hanging out a lantern between six and nine in winter. Similar customs prevailed in all towns. When darkness fell the watchman of each parish came down the street crying—

"Lanthorne and a whole Candell light, hang out your lights heare."

Or the bellman came, crying to the people to put out their fires, and drowsily singing ancient charms * against elves and hobgoblins.

"Maidens to bed and cover coal,
Let the mouse out of her hole.
Crickets in the chimney sing,
Whilst the little bell doth ring."

* *See Milton, "Il Penseroso," lines* 83–4, *and Herrick, in "Hesperides," the verse called "The Bellman."*

By day the streets were full of life and movement. The street cries of itinerant sellers and buyers summoned the poorer housewives to their doors: fish-wives and orange-women, broom-sellers, costard-mongers,* sausage-women, sellers of radishes and lettuces, of inks and pens, of herrings, old doublets, hot mutton pies, pins, and many other things, filled the 17th or 18th century streets. Often they bargained for goods in return—

"New brooms, green brooms, will you buy any?
Come maydens, come quickly, let me take a penny.
* * * * *
Have you any olde boots,
Or any olde shoone . . .
To cope for new broome?"

Down the streets, too, came the ballad-singers, both singing and selling their wares. They were the newsboys of that period. Occasionally, especially in the north, they were men of the type of the medieval minstrel, singing or reciting such old songs as "Chevy Chase." Usually, however, they brought the new kind of ballad which had come in with the printing press, and which some one deliberately wrote and printed for sale on a single sheet of black-letter type. Such was the ballad of the "Children in Wood," printed in 1595 beginning—

"Now ponder well you parents deare
These words which I shall write;
A doleful story you shall hear
In time brought forth to light."

Of this Addison said, in the *Spectator*, that it was "one of the darling songs of the common people." Many ballads, like modern newspapers, told of political news or falsities. In the Civil War most ballad writers took the king's side, and one with the refrain, "The King shall enjoy his own again," is said to have helped the Restoration. In the 18th century refined people disliked the ballads, and tried to put down ballad singing as a "common nuisance."

* *Costard = an apple. Hence we get coster-monger = apple-seller.*

From the open doors of craftsmen's and journeymen's houses other sounds came forth, the hammering of the armourer, the brasier, or the maker of pewter plates, pots and pans, and the singing of men at their work. In James I.'s reign, as in Elizabeth's time, the English were a music-loving people. People of all classes owned simple stringed instruments—citterns, lutes, virginals, viols, and the like—which they loved to play. Weavers at their looms sang "Catches" or "Rounds," as Sir Toby Belch and Sir Andrew Aguecheek well knew—

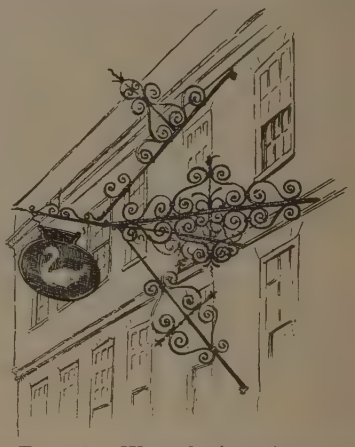

FIG. 42.—Wrought-iron sign outside the Swan Inn at Harleston, Norfolk. Late 17th or early 18th century.

"Hold thy peace, and I prithee hold thy peace,
Thou knave, thou knave! hold thy peace, thou knave!"

Journeymen at their work sang "Hey Robin, jolly Robin," * "Three Merry Men be We," † or "Peg-a-Ramsey" †—

"Peggy is a pretty lass and clever with her hands,
And well she earns a living off the things she understands,
For when the Ramsey shepherd lad has trouble with the lambs
He often gets the best of help of bonny Peg-a-Ramsey!

* * * * * *

Peggy is a cheery lass and merry in her eye,
And certain sure the shepherd will be happy by and bye,
For as soon as he can finish with the rams and lambs and dams
He won't be long to go to church with bonny Peg-a-Ramsey."

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* "*Twelfth Night*," *Act IV., Scene II.*

† "*Twelfth Night*," *Act II. Scene III. Shakespeare's men and women knew by heart the songs of the time. In this scene alone five songs and one catch are quoted or referred to, all but one of which have been discovered in books published at that time.*

The music to which these songs were sung was fresh and simple, as the old song-books show. Among the common folk the love of music which led them to sing these old songs lingered on in country districts far into the 19th century.*

Closely connected with the street life of this period was that of the Tavern, where men met for tippling and jollity. During the 17th century, moreover, when tea and coffee came

FIG. 43.—The Guildhall, Thaxted, Essex, built of timber in James I.'s reign, and plastered over. (The plaster has lately been removed.)

into use, the coffee-house appeared in London, and spread to other large towns. The first was opened in 1652 in Cornhill, by the servant of a merchant of the Turkey Company, who had come from Smyrna with his master. A writer in 1675 said—

"And for coffee, tea, and chocolate, I know no good they do; only the places where they are sold are convenient for persons to meet in, sit half a day, and discourse with all companies that come in of state-matters, talking of news, and broaching of lies."

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* *Higher up in society the introduction, in the 17th century, of instruments like the violin, which were expensive and difficult to play, helped to kill the family habit of playing instrumental music. With Charles I., and still more with Charles II., came French music, and in the 18th century German music (Handel); English music seems to have been killed by these influences.*

The ancient institution of the Craft Gilds was not wholly dead in this period, and apprenticeship was still the usual way of entering an occupation. In the 17th century ballad of the Bailiff's Daughter of Islington we read—

> "There was a youthe, and a well-beloved youthe,
> And he was a squire's son.
> He loved the bayliffe's daughter dere,
> That lived in Islington.
> * * * *
> "But when his friends did understand
> His fond and foolish minde,
> They sent him up to faire London,
> An apprentice for to binde."

In country towns, though merchants engaged in foreign trade often lived in some style, the inland traders and master-craftsmen lived simply and worked hard, and their apprentices did likewise. In London, however, by the time of Defoe, many inland traders were becoming fine fellows. In a book of advice called "The Complete Tradesman" * which he published, he says that many London traders kept two maids at least, and sometimes a footman or two; they wore fine clothes, periwigs, and swords, and were seldom seen with aprons on; their wives dressed like ladies; they had parlours set off with tea-tables and chocolate-pots, and gave wine, punch or fine ale to their friends; they went to balls, plays, operas, and taverns, and formed clubs in which to hear news and to read journals and politics. Defoe begged them to remember that they were not gentlemen, and that "a tradesman's place should be in his business, his companions should be his books." If he went out, he should go to the Exchange, so that the merchants who were his biggest customers should see that he was there; for if he went out merely to take his

* *Defoe distinguishes between the merchant engaged in foreign commerce and the inland trader, whether wholesale or retail. There was less social distinction between the two kinds of inland trader in those old days than between inland trader and merchant.*

ease, the merchant might call at his warehouse and find him from home. In short, the good tradesman was always to be at work from 7 a.m. till 12 noon, and from 2 p.m. till 9 at night.

Defoe criticised also the shops of the time. Elaborate shop windows, in his opinion, with panes of glass no less than 16 inches by 12 in measurement, were a preposterous piece of extravagance ; they were new in this time. Of the retail shopkeeper, however, Defoe spoke with sympathy, for he had to deal with the whims, the "impertinances," "taunts," and "flouts" of individual purchasers who often came to shop without intending to buy. Defoe says—

"He must not show the least signal of disgust : he must have no passions, no fire in his temper ; he must be all soft and smooth ; nay, if his real temper be naturally fiery and hot, he must shew none of it in his shop ; he must be a *complete hypocrite* if he will be a *complete tradesman.*"

By the time when Defoe wrote, in the early 18th century, we may distinguish five main types of town in England. First there were the seaports ; second, the busy posting and great market towns, which lay at important points on main rivers and roads ; third, certain manufacturing towns which were centres for the village industries of a whole district ; fourth, there were many country towns which were merely the social centres for their own limited countryside ; and lastly, there were growing up the watering-places which were resorts for "people of fashion." London and its surrounding villages combined the features of all five.

A good picture of a coast port is derived from Defoe's account of Yarmouth—

"Yarmouth is an antient Town, . . . for Wealth, Trade, and Advantage of its Situation, infinitely superior to Norwich. . . . It is placed on a Peninsula between the River *Yare* and the Sea ; . . . and the Town facing to the West also, and open to the River, makes the finest Key in *England*, if not in *Europe*, not inferior even to that of

Marseilles itself. The Ships ride here so close, and as it were, keeping up one another, with their Head-fasts on Shore, that for half a mile together, they go Cross the Stream with their Bolsprits over the Land their Bowes, or Heads, touching the very Wharf; so that one may walk from Ship to Ship as on a floating Bridge, all along by the Shore-side: The Key reaching from the Draw-Bridge almost to the South-Gate, is so spacious and wide, that in some Places 'tis near One hundred Yards from the Houses to the Wharf. In this pleasant and agreeable range of Houses are some very magnificent Buildings, and among the rest, the Custom-House and Town-Hall, and some Merchants' Houses, which look like little Palaces, rather than the Dwelling-Houses of Private Men. The greatest Defect of this beautiful Town, seems to be, that tho' it is very Rich and encreasing in Wealth and Trade, and consequently in People, there is not Room to enlarge the Town by Building; which would be certainly done much more than it is, but that the River on the Land-side prescribes them, except at the North End without the Gate. . . . During the Fishing-Fair, *as they call it*, which is every *Michaelmas*, One sees the Land cover'd with People, and the River with Barks and Boats, busy Day and Night, landing and carrying off the Herrings, which they catch here in such prodigious Quantities that it is incredible. . . . But this is only One Branch of the great Trade carry'd on in this Town; Another Part of the Commerce, is in the exporting these Herrings after they are Cur'd; and for this their merchants have a great Trade to *Genoa*, *Leghorn*, *Naples*, *Messina* and *Venice*; as also to *Spain* and *Portugal*, also exporting with their Herring very great Quantities of Worsted Stuffs, and Stuffs made of Silk and Worsted; Camblets, &c. the Manufactures of the neighbouring City of *Norwich*, and of the Places adjacent. Besides this they carry on a very considerable Trade with *Holland*, whose opposite Neighbours they are. . . . They have also a considerable Trade to *Norway* and to the *Baltick*, from whence they bring back Deals, and Fir Timber, Oaken Plank, Baulks, Sparrs, Oars, Pitch, Tar, Hemp, Flax, Spruce, Canvas, and Sail-Cloth; with all manner of Naval Stores, which they generally have a consumption for in their own Port, where they build a very great Number of Ships every Year. . . . Add to this the Coal Trade between *Newcastle* and the River of *Thames*. . . . Here is one of the finest Market-places, and the best serv'd with Provisions in *England*, *London excepted*. . . . The Streets are all exactly strait from North to South, with Lanes or Alleys, which they call Rows crossing them in strait Lines also from East to West; so that it is the most regular built Town in *England*. . . . It is also a very well govern'd Town: and I have nowhere in *England* observed the Sabbath-day so exactly kept, or the breach so continually punished as in this Place, which I name to their Honour."

Of the innumerable inland trading towns a good example is Maidstone, described by Defoe as follows:—

"This is a considerable Town, very populous, and the Inhabitants generally Wealthy; 'tis the County Town, and the River *Medway* is

Navigable to it by large Hoys of fifty to sixty Tons Burthen, the Tide flowing quite up to the Town. . . . From this Town, and the Neighbouring Ports, *London* is supplied with more Particulars than from any single Market Town in *England*.

"1. From the *Wild of Kent*, which begins but about Six miles off, and particularly from that Part which lyes this way, they bring the large *Kentish* Bullocks. . . .

"2. From the same Country are brought great quantities of the largest Timber for supply of the King's Yards at *Chattham*, and often to *London*; most of which comes by Land Carriage to *Maidstone*.

"3. From the Country adjoining to Maidstone also is a very great quantity of Corne brought up to *London*, besides *Hops* and *Cherries*.

"4. Also a kind of Paving Stone, about Eight to Ten inches Square. . . .

"5. Also fine white Sand for the Glass-Houses . . . and for the Stationer's use also, vulgarly called Writing-Sand.

"6. Also very great quantities of Fruit, such as *Kentish* Pipins, Russetts, &c. . . .

". . . At *Maidstone* you begin to Converse with Gentlemen, and Persons of Rank of both Sexes, and some of Quality. . . . As soon as we come down *Boxley Hill* from *Rochester*, or *Hollengbourn-Hill*, from *Milton*, and descend from the poor Chalky Downs, and deep Foggy Marshes, to the wholesome rich Soil, the well wooded, and well water'd Plain on the Banks of the *Medway*, we find the Country everywhere Spangl'd with populous villages, and delicious Seats of the Nobility and Gentry. . . . This Neighbourhood of Persons of Figure and Quality, makes *Maidstone* a very agreeable Place to live in, and where a man of Letters, and of Manners, will always find suitable Society, both to Divert and Improve himself; so that there is, what is not often found, namely a Town of very great Business and Trade, and yet full of Gentry, of Mirth, and of good Company."

Of the towns which were centres of rising manufactures, the most typical perhaps is Manchester. This little market town stood in the centre of one large parish of about 60 square miles, which contained 30 other villages; and as late as 1773 there were in the whole parish only 2371 houses. Yet in 1538 Manchester was described as "the fairest, best buildid, quickkest * and most populus tounne of al Lancastreshire." It was famous in the 16th century for manufacture of woollens and linens, and in 1641 we get the first clear evidence that it was manufacturing goods made from "cotton-wool." This is how Defoe describes it—

* *Quick or quik = full of life, busy.*

"From hence we came on to Manchester, one of the greatest, if not really the greatest meer Village in *England*. It is neither a wall'd Town, City, or Corporation; they send no Members to Parliament; and the highest Magistrate they have is a Constable or Headborough. . . . The *Manchester* Trade we all know. . . . Within very few Years past, here, as at Liverpoole, and as at Froom in Somersetshire, the Toun is extended in a surprising manner; abundance, not of new Houses only, but of new Streets of Houses, are added, and a new Church also, and they talk of another, and a fine new Square is at this time building. . . . You have here then an open Village, which is greater and more populous than many, nay, than most Cities in England, not *York*, *Lincoln*, *Chester*, *Salisbury*, *Winchester*, *Worcester*, *Gloucester*, no not *Norwich* it self can come up to it."

The towns which were social centres for the local peers and gentry were found in each county. Here they had their town houses; here they went in the winter for their season; and here grew up the practice of holding assemblies for dancing. These towns were sometimes also trading centres. Such towns were typical of this period. The custom of going to town for a season of dancing at "assemblies" and for other amusement was general in the early 18th century; but the London season was in its infancy. In every shire the local peers and gentry had their town houses, usually in the county town. Sometimes, as in the case of Maidstone, such a town was also important for general trade. In other cases, as, for example, Winchester, Lewes, and Dorchester, its interest was purely local. Of Bury St. Edmunds Defoe says—

"It is crowded with Nobility and Gentry and all sorts of the most agreeable Company; . . . and they that live at Bury, are supposed to live there for the sake of it. . . . The Beauty of this Town consists in the Number of Gentry who dwell in and near it, the Polite Conversation among them; the Affluence and Plenty they live in; the sweet Air they breathe in, and the pleasant Country they have to go abroad in. Here is no manufacturing in this Town, or but very little, except Spinning; the Chief Trade of the Place depending upon the Gentry who live there or near it."

Lastly, there were certain towns which were especially places of pleasure for people of wealth and leisure. Such were Bath,

Tunbridge Wells, Epsom, and Buxton, in Derbyshire. Bath was an ancient walled city, which had been noted from Roman times and through the Middle Ages for the baths fed by springs of medicinal waters, which cured "people diseasid with lepre pokkes, scabbs, and great aches." During the 17th century the practice arose of drinking the waters as well as bathing in them; in consequence it became a famous watering place, and in 1704 the Pump Room was built. As Defoe wrote—

"In former Times this was a Resort hither for Cripples. . . . But now it is the Resort of the Sound, rather than the Sick; the Bathing is made more a Sport and Diversion than a Physical Prescription for Health; and the Town is taken up in Raffling, Gameing, Visiting, and in a Word, all sorts of Gallantry and Levity. . . . In the Morning you (supposing you to be a young Lady) are fetch'd in a close Chair, dress'd in your Bathing Cloths, that is, stript to the Smock, to the *Cross-Bath*. There the Musick plays you into the Bath, and the Women that tend you, present you with a little floating wooden Dish, like a Bason, in which the Lady puts a Handkerchief, and a Nosegay, of late the Snuff-box is added, and some Patches; tho' the Bath occasioning a little Perspiration, the Patches do not stick so kindly as they should. Here the Ladies and Gentlemen pretend to keep some distance on each to their proper Side, but frequently many be here too, as in the King and Queens Bath, tho' not so often; and the Place being but narrow, they converse freely, and talk, rally, make Vows, and sometimes Love; and having thus amused themselves an Hour, or Two, they call their Chairs and return to their Lodgings. The rest of the Diversion here is at the Walks in the great Church, and at the Raffling Shops, which are kept (like the Cloyster at *Bartholomew* Fair), in the Churchyard, and Ground adjoining. In the Afternoon there is generally a Play. . . . In the Evening there is a Ball, and Dancing at least twice a week, which is commonly in the great Town Hall over the Market House: where there never fails in the Season to be a great deal of very good Company."

The city in which trade, manufacture, and amusement were all at their height was London. John Taylor, the Waterman poet, described in Charles I.'s reign how along all the roads into London there came the carriers' carts and the waggons; how the great tilt boats, coast wherries, and hoys crowded the Pool below London Bridge; how above the bridge, great

river barges from Maidenhead, Windsor, Staines, and Chertsey came in twice a week, to the Bull Wharfe; and how the Thames boatmen plied their busy trade. Mr. Pepys in his Diary tells us much more. In the 18th century we have pictures drawn by Addison in the *Spectator*, and by Fielding and the other great novelists. The London season was slowly being born. We also have Gay's account in the "Trivia." Every country town has its own local history. All this the people who live in these places must study for themselves.

BOOK LIST

Author.	Book.	Publisher.
Defoe, Daniel ..	Tour through the whole Island of Great Britain, 1724–7	—
Hindley, Charles	History of the Cries of London	*Hindley.*
Gay, John ..	Trivia; or, the Art of Walking the Streets of London, 1716	*Gay & Bird.*
Sydney, W. C. ..	England and the English in the 18th Century (vol. I.)	*John Grant.*
Ashton, J. ..	The Fleet, its River, Prison, and Marriages	*Chatto.*
Fielding, Henry ..	Amelia, 1751	*Routledge.*
Webb, S. and B. ..	English Local Government, 1689–1834. Part II., Manor and Borough	*Longmans.*
Dekker, T. ..	The Shoemaker's Holiday ..	—
Beaumont and Fletcher ..	The Knight of the Burning Pestle	—
Ben Jonson ..	Bartholomew Fair	—
Wright, Thomas	Homes of Other Days	*Trübner & Co.*
Chappell, William	Popular Music of the Olden Time	*Macmillan.*

See also List under Chap. I.

CHAPTER IX

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE VILLAGE (1600–1760)

I. Parish Officers

In the early 17th century, and for two hundred years after that time, the parish church of each village * was the symbol of government to the simple folk who tilled the soil. There, from Henry VIII.'s reign onwards, were to be seen, over the chancel arch or carved on the top of the ancient rood-screen, the arms of " our Sovereign lord the King "—the lion and the unicorn. There on Sundays sat the constable with his staff, watching for those who talked, laughed, or hummed in service time. There, seated near the door, was the constable's paid servant, the beadle, armed with a whip, who had an eye for naughty children or yelping farm-dogs. In the church, after prayers or sermon, might stand up the parish surveyor of the highways, and read aloud the names of those who had left their ditches uncleansed or had heaped rubbish in the king's highway. In the vestry, after service time, the churchwardens and overseers of the poor would meet to talk over the needs of those who had asked for relief, or to apprentice some poor girl to service, or boy to a trade. Coming out of church people saw, in the very churchyard or hard by its gate, the village-stocks, the key of which had lain in the constable's pocket all service time. Not far off was the whipping-post, where every man, woman, and child had seen people flogged by

* *For definition of a Parish, see Chap. X.*

the constable with the parson as witness. The churchwardens' accounts, which lay in a great oak chest in the vestry, showed a quaint mixture of sums spent. For example, in the accounts of one church in James I.'s reign we read—

"Paid for taking upp the Whipping poste vj^{d}
Paid for two potts and a bason for the commuynon table xvij^{s}
Paid for a pottle of muskedyne and breade for the Comunyon ij^{s} j^{d}
P^{d}. for a locke for the stockes ij^{s} iiij^{d}
Paid to place Rowland Blackborne prentice unto a pewterer xx^{s}
Paid about the steeple c.^{Li}. xv^{s}. xj^{d}
Given to Luke the blinking wench ij^{s}
Paid for a bonefire at the Church doore j^{s}."

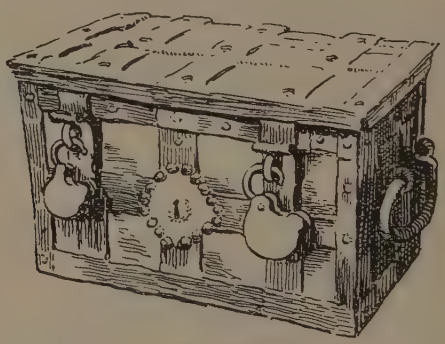

FIG. 44.—An iron-bound oak chest for the keeping of parish records.

The Reformation had, in fact, made the king the head of the Church, as well as head of the State, and the king's government made use of the parish church, which everybody was by law supposed to attend, to see that men did various citizen duties.

At the present day we pay rates to divers local bodies, and expect to have our roads repaired, our poor relieved, our wrong-doers caught and punished, by officials who are salaried to do the work. In those days men took these duties upon

themselves ; and if they neglected them they could be brought before the magistrates and punished.

There were in every parish four principal unpaid offices which " substantial people," such as lesser gentlemen, farmers, and shopkeepers, must hold for a year in turn ; and there were smaller paid offices, which humbler people held. Peers, clergymen, lawyers, and those who held office as Justices of the Peace or who were Members of Parliament, were exempt from any of these duties.

The most decorous office was that of churchwarden, and usually it was the last which a man held. The chief duties dated from the Middle Ages, and were connected with the Church : the holders of the office had to keep the keys of the great oak chest and levy from the people of the parish the Church rate. They had to see to the repair of the church building—nave, aisles, porch, tower—all but the chancel, which was the " Parson's freehold." Churchwardens had to report to the archdeacon and the bishop on the church-going and morals of the parishioners, and might report, too, on the conduct of the parson and his curate.

Of equal importance in the 17th century was the office of petty constable, which also dated from the Middle Ages. In the 15th and 16th centuries, constables had usually been appointed for each manor, in the Lord's Court. But from the 17th century, because the Manor Courts were neglecting their duties, they began to be appointed for each parish ; the parishioners suggested the names, and a Justice of the Peace made the appointment. During his year of office the constable's staff very often hung outside his house. It was his duty to see that the people did their own police work—by doing watch and ward at night—as Dogberry well knew when he set the watch (" Much Ado about Nothing," Act III., Scene III.). As a writer of 1677 tells us—

"A Watch is to be kept in every Town, Parish, Village, and Tything, every night from Ascension till Michaelmas, from Sunset to Sunrise, which the Constables, etc. must constantly cause to be set, and that by two or four men, according to the greatness of the place. These Watchmen are to apprehend and examine all strangers that pass by them in the night, and if they find cause of suspicion in them, then they may secure them till the morning, and if the parties refuse to obey the Watchmen, they may levy hue and cry to take them, and upon their Resistance the Watchmen may justifie the beating of them, and set them in the stocks or Cage till morning."

By day, the Constable had himself to raise the "hue and cry" after thieves and other suspects, and when he did so all men between sixteen and sixty were bound by law to leave their work and follow the chase to the parish boundary. The constable must also arrest and detain suspicious people and take them before a Justice of the Peace. He must, if sent by the Justice of the Peace, go to arrest people by warrant. He must keep an eye on alehouses; if the alehouse keeper sold less than a quart of the best beer for a penny he could get him fined. If he heard profane swearing he could have the swearer punished with "twelvepence for every time so offending," or three hours in the stocks. He could arrest and whip "rogues taken in beggary." In hay and corn harvest farmers applied to him, if short of labourers, for he could force craftsmen, by an Act of 1563, to leave their work and help to mow, reap, and get in crops. He must attend Quarter Sessions at the county town. Many a constable must have heaved a sigh of relief when his year of office was over.

A third and less dignified office was that of surveyor of the highways. From medieval times it had been every man's duty to help to repair the roads of the manor in which he lived. By an Act passed in 1555, every parish * had yearly to appoint one of the parishioners to see that the village

* *From* 1691 *the J.P. appointed the surveyor, on the nomination of the parishioners.*

people really did the work. Those who farmed at least a "ploughland" (roughly reckoned as land worth £50 a year), must send a cart with horses or oxen, and two men with tools. Lesser people must go themselves. The unpaid surveyor determined the time at which the people were to give their annual six days' work, and announced it in church on Sunday. He directed the carts to go for stones, sand, or gravel, or any odd material. He set men to work with "pick-axe, spade, shovel, rake, rammer, chip-axe, and augur," as an old writer says. But village people knew no art in road making, nor had they any care for good roads.* As William Harrison wrote, in Elizabeth's reign—

> "The rich do so cancel their portions and the poor so loiter in their labours, that of all the six, scarcely two good days' work are performed. . . . Sometimes, also, these days' works are not employed upon those ways that lead from market to market, but each Surveyor amendeth such byeplots and lanes as seem best for his own commodity and more easy passage into his fields and pastures."

There is ample evidence that in the 18th century things were not one whit better.

The fourth unpaid parish office, that of overseer of the poor, had been developed gradually from the reign of Henry VIII. to that of Elizabeth, and the duties throughout our period were laid down by the great Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601. Two or more people, together with the churchwardens, were to hold the office of overseer for the year, being "nominated under the hand and seal of two or more Justices of the Peace." Their first duty was to demand, with the justices' assent, a poor-rate from all who occupied lands or houses, or took tithes in the parish. At least once a month, on Sunday afternoon, after Divine Service, they were to meet in church and see to it that the poor were granted relief. The Act laid down that children whose parents could

* *See Chap. IV., p.* 79.

not maintain them were to be set to work, and might be apprenticed to a trade, the boys till they were twenty-four, and the girls till twenty-one. It said further that grown-up men and women who had no regular occupation were to be "set on work," the overseers providing flax, wool, thread, iron, or other raw materials of handicraft. Thirdly, it decreed that the lame, impotent, old, blind, and others not able to work, were to be given relief. By old English law the poor could get these benefits only in their own native parishes, or in places where they had lived for three years. The able-bodied idler was not to get relief; for another Act, passed in 1601, provided for the public whipping of the "rogue, vagabond, or sturdy beggar" found wandering away from his native place, and laid down that he was to be forthwith sent back "the next straight way to the parish where he was born."

In the little parishes of the 17th century, four-fifths of which had probably less than 300 people living in them, poor relief was simple. The overseers knew the poor personally, and gave loaves of bread, bundles of wood, bushels of wheat, hundredweights of coal, flannel petticoats, stockings, coats, and breeches to the poor, as they required them. Sometimes they gave a cottage to live in. The following are chance extracts from the accounts of a London parish :—

	£	*s.*	*d.*
"A.D. 1648. To Anne Thompson, her husband being taken with the dead palsey		1	0
To Alice Ffenson, her husband being in slavery * . .			3
A.D. 1649. Paid to my self [Ffrancis Mate] for Hart's child that I have as an apprentice	7	0	0
A.D. 1652. Given to Goodwife Hale to by Hemp to spynn		2	0
Given to Mr. Gosling and his wife, whoo were undone at Worcester.†		1	0"

* *He had evidently been captured by Mediterranean pirates.* *See p. 94.*

† *They had probably been ruined by the Battle of Worcester.*

Besides these unpaid offices, there was in every parish humbler work for which the parishioners paid. The highest paid office was that of the parish clerk.* There were also the sexton, the beadle, the dog-whipper, the scavenger, the bellman or crier, and the like.

We may picture the meeting held each year, in Easter week, in the vestry of a parish which tried to do its duty. The parson in cassock and bands has come to preside. The squire, or his steward, has come in, and sits in the place of honour at the parson's side. The "substantial householders" of the village, freeholders, copyholders, or tenant farmers, fresh from the plough and the flail, and also perhaps, the innkeeper and the miller, sit round the walls. The churchwardens for the previous year bring a rough parish account-book, or even, sometimes, loose sheets of paper, showing the money they have received from church-rates and poor-rates, and the sums they have spent for all sorts of quaint purposes. The new churchwardens are appointed; the names of those who are to serve as constable, surveyor, or overseers are discussed for recommendation to the justices. If the beadle or other petty officer has misbehaved himself, a new one may be appointed. If stocks, or pound, or cage, or whipping-post are in disorder some one may speak of mending them.

II. The Justice of the Peace

The parish officers of the village did their work under the watchful eye of the nearest unpaid magistrate, a gentleman who held the office of Justice of the Peace. Sometimes he was their own squire, living at the manor house; sometimes the nearest Justice of the Peace lived several miles away. The most important people in the government of every county in

* *See Chap. X., p.* 209.

our period were these unpaid magistrates. They were resident country gentlemen appointed to office by the king. They did much work that is now done by county councils, as well as the work that is still done by the county Justices of the Peace. Four times a year all the justices of a county met in the county town, at the Court of Quarter Sessions, and there it was that their most important work was done. But any single justice was liable, day by day, to have important duties to perform in his own hall or parlour, or side by side with a neighbouring justice at some village inn. This side of his work must be studied in order to understand the government of the village.

From the note-book of a Lancashire justice in the reigns of James I. and Charles I. (1616–1630) we may gain an idea of this work. Oswald Moseley, Esquire, lived at the ancient Manor House of Ancoats, near Manchester, and doubtless like other country gentlemen, spent much time in managing his estate, in hunting and in entertaining his friends. But on any day in the week the constables of villages around might bring before him people accused of tippling, swearing, poaching, robbing orchards or gardens, or pilfering from corn-fields, women who "scolded," persons who begged without licence and similar petty offenders. He could sit at once in judgment on such small misdemeanours. He could order the "scold" to be placed in the ducking-stool, and to be lowered by the constable into the river. Hedgebreakers, pilferers, and beggars without a licence he could order to be publicly whipped. Other wrong-doers could be placed to sit for two days and a night in the stocks. Besides summarily judging lesser offences, Oswald Moseley had to deal as Justice of the Peace with those accused of felony and other great crimes. If a suspected person were loitering in some village, the constable came to him for a warrant for his arrest. He or his clerk

took down the evidence * against the accused, and if it was sufficiently serious he committed him for trial, either at Quarter Sessions before the County Justices, or at Assizes before the King's Judges.

Oswald Moseley made careful note in his diary of all the serious matters which came before him. Thus we find on June 15, 1616 :

"Mem. : One Richard Thorpe of Colne was taken for stealing X yards and a half of linnen cloathe ad † value $8^{d.}$ a yard from the stale [= stall] of Richard Jones of Manchester aforesaid, chapman, the said Thorpe was taken with the manour [= in the act], examinations taken viz. Richard Jones, Joane uxor † Arnold Mort and the prisoner. A mittimus [= order to county gaoler to keep him till trial] for the said Richard Thorpe.

"Recognition from Richard Jones aforesaid to prosecute a bill of indictment etc. at the next assizes at Lancaster etc. in £10."

So Richard Thorpe was sent to the county gaol, and Richard Jones (and possibly also Joane the wife of Arnold Mort) had to appear the one as prosecutor and the other as witness at the Assizes.

Besides administering justice, Oswald Moseley had to see that the constables and people of neighbouring villages did their duty, that overseers and surveyors looked after the poor, or repaired the roads, that apprentices and journeymen did not leave their master's service till the year was out, that unemployed workmen did not refuse to work. Here are some odd entries from his note-book :—

April 11, 1616.—

"A precept [= order] to the constables of Faylsworth to appear at the next Quarter Sessions to answer their default in execution of their office."

May 28.—

"A precept to the constables of Manchester to apprehend Ralph Turner of Manchester, Sheereman, to show cause why he departed forth of the service of Richard Sheardley of the same place, sheereman, being lawfully retained."

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* *The evidence when taken down was and is known as the Indictment.*

† *People in those days were fond of scattering Latin words here and there in their writing. Ad = to. Uxor = wife (of).*

January 11, 1617.—
"A precept to cause Thomas Ellenthorpe to come and shew cause why he should not serve George Birch in due form."

Oswald Moseley had also to summon people who, in defiance of the Statute of Uniformity of 1559, failed to attend church. He kept in his note-book the following ready-made form :—

"Oswald Moseley Esqr., etc. . . . Forasmuch as it is proved unto me that you A. B. etc. . . . two several Sundays, viz. the 1st and 8th of April last or either of them did not repair to any Church, Chapel, or any other place appointed for common prayer nor there did hear common prayer according to the Statute in that behalf made in the first year of the reign of the late Queen Elizabeth, but did forbear the same, contrary to the said statute and not having any lawful or reasonable excuse to be absent and that by force of the statute in the behalf made and provided I am authorized to call you before me. Therefore these are by force of the said statute to command you to be and personally appear before me at my house at Ancoats upon Monday next not failing hereof at your peril. Given etc. . . .

A great day was it in a 17th century justice's life when Quarter Sessions met, and he found himself on the bench of magistrates. When all the indicted prisoners had been tried by jury and judged, the parishes and their doings must be dealt with. Every petty constable had to bring with him to Quarter Sessions a paper of answers to a long list of questions referring to his parish. The following were included :—

1. The names of all Popish recusants.

2. The names of those who continually tippled and got drunk in ale-houses, especially on Sundays and Holy Days, and the names of the innkeepers allowing it.

3. The names of those who profanely cursed and swore with the number of their oaths.

4. Those who neglected watch and ward.

5. Those who would not help to repair the highways.

6. Bakers who sold light bread ; men who bought up corn, butter, cheese, or bacon in large quantities, or before it reached the market, etc., etc.

The names of whole parishes who neglected the poor or the roads, and the names of any petty constables who refused to do their duty could also be reported. Any person or parish so "presented" could be prosecuted at the next Sessions if the Bench so ordered it.

At the Quarter Sessions following Easter, the Justices of the Peace had (by an Act passed in 1563 and confirmed in 1603) the additional duty of considering the rates of wages during the ensuing year for servants, artisans, and labourers of all kinds in their county. The justices had first to consider the price of corn and other necessaries. They then drew up a scale of wages which was submitted to the Lord Chancellor, and at Michaelmas time it was ready to be posted in all the markets of the county. This was the time when the workers generally went to the "Hiring Fairs," and stood in the markets to be engaged; and these wages-scales showed them clearly what they were to receive either by the year, or the day, with or without food.

In the early 17th century the King's Council looked strictly after the work of the Justice of the Peace. But with the fall of the king a change crept in. Justices were appointed mainly to please the political party which was in power. When Mr. Pepys received the office he remarked—

"With which honour I did find myself mightily pleased, though I am wholly ignorant in the duties of a Justice of the Peace."

A small book for justices published in 1693 reveals the fact that bribery, laziness, ignorance of law and prejudice were becoming common faults of Justices of the Peace.

"What is half a dozen Chickens or a Couple of Capons to a man of Worship? and yet for such pitiful prices have some men sold their reputations, and laid themselves open to the scandal and derision of the World. . . . Sometimes the Wife, the Children, and the Clerk are purchased underhand to recommend the Case to the Justice."

In the first half of the 18th century the greedy, selfish justices

of London and other towns, and the idle fox-hunting ones of many country districts, become familiar to us in the pages of the great novelists. Of the former class were Mr. Jonathan Thrasher of Fielding's "Amelia," and Justice Buzzard in Smollett's "Humphrey Clinker"; of the latter class were Squire Western in "Tom Jones," and the gay, hard-drinking Justice in Book II., Chap. XI., of "Joseph Andrews."

But these novelists were satirists. They described the worst types of their time. Even Fielding gives us Squire Allworthy in "Tom Jones," and Smollett gives us Sir Lancelot Greaves, while Addison gives us Sir Roger de Coverley. The bulk of the country gentry who held the office did their unpaid duties according to their lights; the best of them were the kind and benevolent rulers of the English countryside.

Book List

Author.	Book.	Publisher.
Webb, S. and B.	English Local Government, Part I. Parish and County	*Longmans.*
Trotter, E ..	Seventeenth Century Life in the Country Parish.	*Cambridge Press.*
Leonard, E. M. ..	Early History of English Poor Relief.	,,
Gollancz (Ed.) ..	Rogues and Vagabonds in Shakespeare's Youth	*Chatto.*
Cox, J. C. ..	Churchwarden's Accounts. ..	*Methuen.*

CHAPTER X

THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL LIFE (1600–1760)

I. 1600–1660

In the 17th century there were in the whole of England some 9,000 parishes, large and small, each with its parish church. In the north of England, where population was scanty, the parishes were large ; thus Halifax, in Yorkshire, was twelve by twenty miles across, and included, besides the market town, many little hamlets amongst the hills. In the south-east of England parishes were much smaller ; each considerable village or small town was usually also a parish, while larger towns contained several parishes, of small size but thickly peopled.

The people were, by law, obliged to attend their parish church on Sundays and Holy Days. If they did not attend the churchwardens might have them summoned before a Justice of the Peace,* and fined, though easy-going churchmen often failed to put the law in action. No one then believed that a person could lead an honest life who did not sometimes go to church ; and scarcely any one thought it possible to have in England more than one kind of church—the " Church of England." The parish church was still, moreover, to the simple country-folk of the early 17th century the centre for much of their merriest social life. At Whitsuntide there

* *See Chap. IX., pp.* 184–189.

was baking of cakes and brewing of ale for the annual "church-ale." A contemporary writes—

> "For the church-ale two young men of the parish are yearly chosen by their last fore-goers to be wardens, who, dividing the task, make collection among the parishioners of whatsoever provision it pleaseth them voluntarily to bestow. This they employ in brewing, baking, and other acates [= things purchased], against Whitsuntide, upon which holidays the neighbours meet at the Church-house and there merrily feed on their own victuals. . . . Besides, the neighbour parishes at those times lovingly visit one another, and this way frankly spend their money together."

Sunday afternoon was also a time for revels, "such as dancing . . . archery for men, leaping, vaulting, and . . . having of May-games . . . and Morris-dances," as it had been in the Middle Ages.

By the year 1760 all this was changed. Men had separated into many religious sects. Little chapels were growing up in the shadow of the churches. Merriment had departed from church life. In so short a space it is impossible to trace the whole of this great change. This chapter will merely illustrate some of the effects of religious ideas and observances on men's daily lives.

The 9000 parish churches which the people had to attend were, in the early 17th century, too often in a neglected state. The clergy, who, since the Reformation might be married men, were very badly paid. In some places where, in old times, a rich monastery or cathedral chapter had appointed the parson to the living, a wealthy layman had acquired the right and now made money out of it. The parishes, also, in which a monastery had been made rector, and had taken the greater tithes, appointing a vicar to do the work, had not at the Reformation had these rectorial tithes restored; a "lay rector" had been allowed to seize on these ancient church payments. So badly paid, therefore, were the clergy that

was still common, as it had been before the Reformation, for a parson to hold two, three, four, or even five livings; he could not serve them all, and therefore to one or more he would appoint a curate at £10, £8, £6, £4, or even £2 a year. Men of ability and education were discouraged from taking Holy Orders under these conditions, and thus the parson was, in many places, a rough uncultivated person, who tippled in the alehouse, and ranked with the squire's servants.

There were still left in England, in the early 17th century, a large number of families who had never ceased to be loyal to the Church of Rome. In the six northern counties, amongst the hills and moorlands, there were villages and whole districts where all were Roman Catholics from the lord to the cottager, and here the parson sometimes read service to an empty church. But in villages of the south, where there were many Protestants, the Catholics lived under terror of the severe penal laws. Those who refused to attend the English Church were known as Recusants. If rich enough they were liable to be fined £20 a month. They might not, without the written permission of two Justices of the Peace, stir more than five miles from home. They might not attend a celebration of Mass without fear of fine and imprisonment. In all cases much depended upon the goodwill of neighbours. The severest laws were aimed, not at the old-fashioned Catholics, but at the Jesuits and other priests from abroad who had first come to England in Queen Elizabeth's reign to try to reconvert the country, and who were believed, often with truth, to be plotting treason.* A layman who harboured one of these priests could be hanged, as well as the priest himself.

* *These enthusiastic priests were trained, some at the English College in Rome, founded in* 1579, *others at colleges in Douai and St. Omer, in Flanders, and at Liège.*

To this section belonged the men who took part in the Gunpowder Plot, though the Jesuit Order itself denied all knowledge of it. Most English Catholics dreaded these men from abroad, but all of them suffered in consequence of their coming. Fresh penal laws were passed against Catholics in 1606, and spies and informers now had a merry time, for if a man could get his Roman Catholic neighbour fined he received one-third of the sum.

Undaunted by the danger, more and more Jesuits came to England, and were welcomed by the small section of Roman Catholics who believed in their methods. An account, written in 1616, tells us of the life these Jesuits led. Some lived as chaplains in private houses, and were hidden away by day in some remote attic, which was furnished merely with altar, table, and bed. The Jesuit must not stir from his room except at dead of night. He must tread stealthily lest the floor should creak. At the hour for Mass the Roman Catholic members of the household crept silently in. Except for this daily service, a priest, in a household of sixty or eighty people, lived for weeks or even months entirely alone, seeing only the maid who brought his food, and those who came to confess. Others of these Jesuits, however, travelled about on horseback in disguise, leading a missionary life, and comforting the Roman Catholics who would receive them all over the kingdom. Many were caught and cruelly tortured; others were left to die in horrible prisons. As late as 1679 a priest, John Wall, was hanged near Worcester.

The majority of the English Roman Catholics who were loyal to the Government and feared to get mixed up with treason led uncertain lives. Sometimes, after years of peaceful life, when the penal laws had been little enforced, news would come to a Catholic household that the Privy Council was

stirring ; a Justice of the Peace, with armed men at his heels, would ride to the house and search for arms, carrying away pikes, bills, muskets, and even innocent fowling-pieces. Sometimes a hasty argument with a neighbour, sometimes the unwise gossip of his household, would get a man into trouble. The story of Sir Thomas Gerrard, of Lancashire, as told in a letter of 1625, gives an inkling of the life of an ordinary peaceable Catholic—

" Two maids of his, washing clothes at a pit, fell a'talking together of the brave times that would be shortly for their religion, when Mr. Turner, a busy Justice of the Peace, would be turned out of office, Mr Horne, parson of the place, should have horns set upon his head. . . . 'And my brother Robert (Sir Thomas' groom) is one of those that must kill the king.' This discourse being overheard by a pedlar, or some such loose fellow, who was lying sunning behind a hedge, he goes presently to an honest and substantial man of the town, one Prescot, and tells him what he heard Sir Thomas Gerrard's maids talking at the pit. He presently informs the parson, Mr. Allen ; the parson writes to the Bishop of Chester ; he to the lords of the Council. They send a mandate to the sheriff to apprehend him, which he did on Monday was sennight."

A later letter says—

" Sir Thomas Gerrard of Lancashire is in the Tower."

Such was the life of the ordinary Roman Catholics up to the accession of Charles I. The marriage of Charles to a Roman Catholic princess, however, made life easier for them. The penal laws were less sternly enforced, and when the Civil War began, the English Catholics, one and all, were loyal to the king.

Besides the Roman Catholics, another section was steadily increasing in the early 17th century, who had not yet broken from the English Church. The Puritans were as yet few in number, and very unpopular. They were known as men who scowled and frowned at many of the time-honoured customs of the English countryside, such as the maypole and morris dance, and the carrying of Jack in the Green. The Puritans

hated theatre-going, gay dress, and merriment. Ben Jonson mocked at them when he said they wore—

> "Religion in their garments, and their hair,
> Cut shorter than their eyebrows."

But under James I. and Charles I., when the English Bible began to be read, not merely in churches but in people's homes, large numbers of men and women became Puritans. Such a change in the outlook of ordinary men is described by Richard Baxter in his Autobiography. The son of a yeoman farmer, he was born in 1615 in Shropshire. His native village and the surrounding district suffered from ignorant, incompetent, and poverty-stricken clergy. He thus wrote—

"In the village where my father lived, there was a Reader of about eighty years of age, that never preached, and had two churches about 20 miles distant. His eyesight failing him, he said common prayer without book; but for the reading of the Psalms and chapters he got a common thresher and day-labourer one year, and a tailor another year (for the Clerk could not read well) . . . Within a few miles about us, were near a dozen more ministers that were near 80 years old apiece, and never preached: poor ignorant Readers, and most of them of scandalous lives; only 3 or 4 constant competent preachers lived near us, and those (though conformable all save one) were the common marks of the people's obloquy and reproach, and any that had but gone to hear them when he had no preaching at home, was made the derision of the vulgar rabble, under the odious name of a Puritan. But . . . it pleased God to instruct and change my Father, by the bare reading of the Scriptures in private, without either preaching or godly company, or any other books but the Bible: and God made him the instrument of my first convictions. . . . At first my Father set me to read the historical part of the Scripture, which suiting with my nature, greatly delighted me, and though all that time I neither understood nor relished much the doctrinal part, and mystery of Redemption, yet it did me good by acquainting me with the matters of fact, and drawing me on to love the Bible, and to search by degrees into the rest."

Thus the Puritanism of which Richard Baxter and his father were accused was the direct result of reading the Bible. Thousands of others were doing the same. It led them to desire a simple, quiet, and sober life. The old English Sunday, however, with its afternoon of sports and jollity, clashed with this spirit. We must look at the question with Baxter's eyes to understand his point of view—

"In the village where I lived the Reader read the Common Prayer briefly, and the rest of the day even till dark night almost, except eating-time, was spent in dancing under a Maypole and a great tree not far from my Father's door; where all the town did meet together. And though one of my Father's own tenants was the Piper, he could not restrain him nor break the sport; so that we could not read the Scripture in our family without the great disturbance of the Taber and Pipe and noise in the street! Many times my mind was inclined to be among them; and sometimes I broke loose from conscience and joined with them; and the more I did it the more I was inclined to it. But when I heard them call my Father 'Puritan' it did much to cure me and alienate me from them; for I considered that my Father's exercise of reading the Scripture, was better than theirs, and would surely be better thought on by all men at the last. . . . For my Father never scrupled Common Prayer or Ceremonies, nor spake against Bishops, nor even so much as prayed but by a book or form, being not ever acquainted then with any that did otherwise: But only for reading Scripture when the rest were dancing on the Lord's Day, and for praying (by a Form out of the end of the Common prayer book) in his house, and for reproving drunkards and swearers, and for talking sometimes a few words of Scripture, and the life to come, he was reviled commonly by the name of Puritan, Precisian, and Hypocrite."

To Baxter, and other Puritans like him, the Bible taught a new spirit—

"I saw that Christ did bring up all his serious and sincere disciples to real holiness and to heavenly mindedness, and made them new creatures, and set their hearts and designs and hopes upon another life, and brought their sense into subjection to their reason, and taught them to resign themselves to God and love Him above all the world."

There was yet a third section of people who were dissatisfied with much that they saw and heard in the English Church in the early 17th century. These were men and women who loved and reverenced not only the Bible, but the prayers, the festivals, the time-honoured buildings, and beautiful ceremonies which the Church had inherited from the Middle Ages. When they met a parson who behaved like a layman all the week, when they saw a church dirty and neglected, with its windows broken, and its communion table standing in the nave and used for any handy purpose, they felt that religion itself would suffer.

Such a man was George Herbert, born in 1593, in the Castle of Monmouth, of an ancient and noble family. Educated at Westminster School, and at Cambridge, he became a noted scholar; yet he chose to be a country parson at a time when such a position was despised, and when he might have had a great career at court. To one who objected he said—

"It hath been formerly adjudged that the domestic servants of the King of heaven should be of the noblest families on earth; and though the iniquity of the late times have made clergymen meanly valued, and the sacred name of priest contemptible, yet I will labour to make it honourable by consecrating all my learning and all my poor abilities to advance the glory of God that gave them. . . . And I will labour to be like my Saviour, by making humility lovely in the eyes of all men."

In 1630 he was made rector of Bemerton, near Salisbury. He found that the chancel of the church and the parsonage needed repair; as Izaak Walton, his biographer, tells us—

"Almost three parts of his house . . . was fallen down or decayed by reason of his predecessor's living at a better parsonage house, sixteen or twenty miles from this place."

So he got the church repaired; and he rebuilt most of the parsonage, writing these verses over the chimney in his hall—

"*To My Successor.*

"If thou chance for to find
A new house to thy mind,
And built without cost;
Be good to the poor
As God gives thee store,
And then thy labour's not lost."

George Herbert taught the simple country-folk of Bemerton to reverence the parish church as God's house. He taught the rich that all are equal in God's sight. In one of his many poems he wrote—

"When once thy foot enters the church, be bare.
God is more there than thou; for thou art there
Only by His permission. Then beware,
And make thyself all reverence and fear.
Kneeling n'er spoiled silk stockings; quit thy state,
All equal are within the church's gate."

He taught them also that every part of the service had its meaning, and that they must not gape or loll in service time—

> "Let vain or busy thoughts have there no part.
> Bring not thy plough, thy plots, thy pleasure thither.
> Christ purged His temple; so must thou thy heart.
> All worldly thoughts are but thieves met together
> To cozen thee. Look to thy actions well;
> For churches either are our heaven or hell."

But, above all, he set before himself a high standard of a country parson's life. He was the 17th century counterpart of Chaucer's "parson of a toun." In one of his books we read—

> "The Country Parson is exceeding exact in his life, being holy, just, prudent, temperate, bold, grave in all his ways. . . . The Country Parson is full of all knowledge. They say it is an ill mason that refuseth any stone. . . . The Country Parson upon the afternoons in the weekdays takes occasion sometimes to visit in person now one quarter of his parish, now another. For there he shall find his flock most naturally as they are, wallowing in the midst of their affairs. . . . The Country Parson is full of Charity. . . . He first considers his own parish, and takes care that there be not a beggar or idle person in his parish, but that all be in a competent way of getting their living. . . . The Country Parson is not only a father to his flock, but also professeth himself thoroughly of the opinion, carrying it about with him as if he had begot the whole parish."

A very different man, who was of George Herbert's way of thinking, was William Laud; he was made Bishop of London in 1628, and Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633. He was warmly supported in all his views by Charles I. When Laud came to London he wrote—

> "Since I came into this place, . . . I evidently saw that the public neglect of God's service in the outward face of it, and the nasty lying of many places dedicated to that service, had almost cast a damp upon the true and inward worship of God; which while we live in the body, needs external help."

Laud found old St. Paul's Cathedral almost concealed from view by little houses which men had built up against the walls. Inside, the whole building was in disrepair, and the sounds of prayer and preaching were drowned, as they had been in Chaucer's day, by the clatter of porters carrying

burdens, by the light laughter of gay ladies and gentlemen, and by the eager talk of business men making bargains. Other churches were in like case. Laud urged the clergy to remove the communion table to the east end and rail it round, and ordered them to see that every part of the service was exactly observed. Charles and Laud agreed in thinking that if men went to church in orderly fashion on Sunday morning, innocent sports and games might well be played in the afternoon to keep men from tippling in the alehouse. But Puritans thought it idolatry to put a rail round a mere table; and they thought it profanely wicked to play games upon the Sabbath. Laud tried to bring back into the services of the Church of England many small ceremonies of which the Prayer-book said nothing; but these to Puritans seemed mere "rags of Popery."

Laud's policy led to the first great schism since the time of the Reformation in the Church of England. Because bishops enforced what Puritans thought wrong, men like Baxter began to doubt the whole system of government by bishops. The Puritan colony of Massachusetts was founded in 1628, and it received 700 new emigrants in 1633, the year when Laud became archbishop. Poorer people who could not afford to emigrate, betook themselves to woods, fields, and barns for separate services, and these meetings were known as Conventicles. Such people were known as Conventiclers or Separatists. When caught they were punished with imprisonment. In 1632 Laud wrote—

"We took another conventicle of separatists in Newington Woods on Sunday last, in the very brake where the King's stag should have been lodged for his hunting next morning."

The bitterness produced by religious divisions was one important cause of the great Civil War, and the death of

Charles I. Moderate churchmen of the type of George Herbert, who loved old ways, men also of the sterner type of Laud, and Roman Catholics, fought for the king. Puritans of many different parties and opinions fought against him. In this wild period of fierce and earnest belief men of all classes began to think for themselves. In the towns many sects appeared. In London, traders, cobblers, weavers, tailors, and even women took it upon themselves to preach. The Anabaptists or Baptists became numerous. George Fox, the great Quaker, began to preach.

The Puritan peers, gentry, and merchants who controlled parliament were shocked at these popular doings, although they themselves forbade the use of the Prayer-book and abolished the office of bishop. To check the popular movement, when they called in the Scots to help them against the king, they took the Solemn League and Covenant, whereby they promised to make England a Presbyterian country like Scotland. In Scotland the people of each parish were strictly looked after by their minister and by their elected lay elders; many parishes were grouped into one Presbytery, which was ruled over by a Council of Ministers and Elders; and each Presbytery sent elected ministers and elders to the National Assembly which ruled the Church of Scotland. The Scottish people were therefore strictly and sternly taught by "their betters" what to believe and how to behave. The Puritan upper classes who sat in the English parliament thought this would be good for the common Englishman, too.

But Cromwell and the yeomen farmers or Ironsides who fought under him believed in greater freedom. They thought that the people of each parish should decide for themselves what to believe and how to worship. They were known as Independents. The men of the New Model Army, which Cromwell formed in 1645, won the Civil War, defeated the

king, and set up the Commonwealth in England. They agreed with the Presbyterians in forbidding the use of the Common Prayer-book; but they opposed all attempt to force the people of every English parish to become Presbyterians like the Scots. Therefore into some parishes there came a Presbyterian minister who governed and taught the people strictly. To others an Independent was appointed; and to others a member of the sect of Baptists, to which John Bunyan belonged. Some of the older clergy stayed on in their parishes and did their best, occasionally even reciting from memory during the service parts of the forbidden Prayer-book. Many others left their livings and were replaced by Puritans.

Meanwhile men of other beliefs were free to attend the conventicles, and many new sects flourished. But May-day and morris dances, Easter festivals and Christmas carols and jollity were forbidden by the soldiers who fought for freedom. Thus England grew weary, and longed for the old ways.

II. 1660–1760

When the king came home in 1660 he was welcomed on Blackheath by 2000 of Cromwell's old Ironsides. As they watched him come many believed that the Civil War had not been fought in vain. They hoped for a settlement in which all but the Roman Catholics would have religious freedom. With the king there came from abroad, not only Royalists, who loved the Church of England, but loyal Catholics who had fought for his father, and who had hastened to Breda at the news of his return. They, too, had great hopes of religious freedom. Puritans and Roman Catholics alike were doomed to bitter disappointment. It was now the turn of the great body of Royalists to restore what they had lost.

The death of Charles I. on the scaffold had altered the whole outlook. To many Englishmen who loved the English Prayer-

book and the old English Church Charles was a martyr to his religion. A special service was appointed to be read every year on the anniversary of his death, and "Church and King" became sacred in the minds of large numbers of English folk. The quiet and ordered beauty of Cranmer's service-book seemed restful to men's minds after all the strife. Even Puritans amongst the peers and gentry had been scandalised at the preachings and prophesyings of humble and untutored people. The idea grew up that emotion or "enthusiasm" in religion led men astray. The Puritan gentlemen from this time became quiet and observant members of the Church of England; the cavalier gentlemen became devoted High Churchmen. The demands for change were thenceforth made chiefly by merchants, traders, artisans, shopkeepers, all middle-class folk.

After two years of uncertainty and baffled hopes, in 1662 the Act of Uniformity laid down that there was to be "an universal agreement in the public worship of Almighty God," and that the Common Prayer-book alone was to be used "in every church, chapel, or other place of public worship within the realm of England." On or before August 24, 1662, every clergyman refusing the conditions laid down in the Act was to be deprived of his living. No other form of worship was allowed, except to foreigners of the Reformed Churches; and any person not conforming who persisted in preaching was liable to three months' imprisonment in the common gaol for every offence.

Every parish was now astir, for a new service-book had to be bought, and the church, much neglected of late, must be put in repair. The little village of Theberton, in Suffolk, for example, spent 10*s.* on a service-book, and £33 1*s.* 2*d.* on repairing the church. The village plumber and carpenter were set to work; thatchers were busy on the roof; ivy was

pulled off the steeple ; and the bells were sent to " Darbie of Ipswich " for repair.

Of the parish clergy of England over 2000 out of 9000 were unable to accept the Act of Uniformity, and resigned their livings. On August 17, 1662, many parting sermons were preached, especially in London, where there were large numbers of Presbyterians. Pepys tells in his diary how he went at eight o'clock in the morning to hear one of the farewell sermons at St. Dunstan's Church in the Strand, and " crowded in at a back door among others, the church being half full almost before any doors were open publicly."

To the vacant livings many brave men returned who had suffered exile under the Puritan rule, or who had stayed in England, and read the Prayer-book service in private. These were men who had suffered for their beliefs. But of those who kept their livings many, like the famous Vicar of Bray in the old song, had simply changed with the times. The influence of such men on the Church of England was bad.

The Act of Uniformity was followed in 1664 by the Conventicle Act, whereby people were forbidden to hold or attend any religious service for more than five persons, except that of the Established Church ; they could be imprisoned for the first or second offence, and transported for the third. In consequence all services in meeting-houses, in barns, in fields, or even in private houses, except for family prayers, once more became unlawful. Henceforward, the Puritans were usually known as Nonconformists or Dissenters.

Many of the dispossessed parsons defied the law and set up meeting-houses even in London. For example, the Rev. Thomas Doolittle, late rector of St. Alphege, a Presbyterian, did so. At midnight, one Saturday in 1666, he heard a knock at his door. Looking out he saw a company of Trained Bands sent to arrest him. He managed, however, to escape

from the house, and next morning another minister conducted the service. In the middle of the sermon the meeting-house door flew open, and in marched a company of soldiers. The officer cried to the minister, "I command you in the King's name to come down." He replied, "I command you, in the name of the King of Kings, not to disturb His worship." The officer bade his men fire. But the people were in uproar; the men did not fire; and in the confusion the minister escaped. The chapel, however, was closed; guards were set outside; and the king's broad arrow was painted upon the bolted doors. This is but one of many examples. Amongst the Nonconformist sects that suffered most was that of the Society of Friends.*

The most famous of the Nonconformists who suffered imprisonment at this time was John Bunyan. The son of "an honest poor labouring man," as he himself says, he had been bred to his father's trade of a tinker. In the year 1655 he had become a Baptist minister, and he had been famous all over the Midland counties for his sermons. When the Act of Uniformity came he held services in woods, barns, and private houses, and was at length arrested and imprisoned in Bedford gaol. Because of his fame, magistrates and judges were anxious to release him, but he would not promise to cease preaching. Sometimes the governor of the gaol let him go for a day or more, and then he would preach in the woods as of old. At other times he spent his time in prison reading the Bible, and writing the "Pilgrim's Progress."

The Roman Catholics of the Restoration Period suffered much more than did Protestant Dissenters, owing to the dark

* *See the "Autobiography of Thomas Ellwood," for a vivid description of a meeting broken up by soldiers.*

suspicions which had hung round them from the time of the Gunpowder Plot; and to these suspicions the secret plotting of the Jesuit section, which still went on both in France and England, gave some colour. The bitter disappointment of loyal Roman Catholics is summed up in the diary of William Blundell, who had fought and suffered for Charles I.—

"In my younger days our next Justice of the Peace sent one of my tenants, a soldier of the trained bands, to the gaol for refusing the oath of allegiance. He was prisoner a year or two, and being at last released in the time of the war, he took up arms for the King, and lived and died (with his poor estate sequestered) a loyal Catholic subject; whilst that very same Justice of the Peace was one of the King's Judges and died (for aught I know) an unrepenting rebel. . . . When the bloody deed was done, Milton and sundry others by writing, and thousands of others by the sword, defended it as just. Yet Milton and those are pardoned and live in security. . . . My limbs, my goods, my liberty I lost on the same account. Many others of ours lost life and all. . . . If we must therefore beg or hang I pray God bless the King, and the will of God be done."

Charles II., who was secretly a Roman Catholic, tried to benefit them in 1672 by a Declaration of Indulgence, which relieved the Puritan Dissenters, too. But even Puritans distrusted toleration if it was granted also to Roman Catholics, and the Declaration was withdrawn. Every 5th of November was the occasion for burnings of figures of Guy Fawkes and the Pope; in London, from 1676–1678, a vast Pope-burning procession marched through the streets each year, ending up with a bonfire at Temple Bar. The story is told in every text-book of how Titus Oates, in 1678, worked upon this state of feeling by the wicked story of an imaginary Popish Plot It was the attempt by James II. in 1687 to allow Roman Catholics freedom from penal laws which brought about his abdication, and the Revolution of 1688.

When William III. came to the throne the Puritan Nonconformists gained toleration for their beliefs. The famous Act of 1689 gave freedom of worship to all except Unitarians

and Roman Catholics. Prim little chapels of brick or grey stone, with red or grey tiled roofs, began to be built in towns, and occasionally in villages, by Independents (or Congregationalists), Presbyterians, Baptists, and Quakers. These places, or even private houses, might be used for worship if registered at Quarter Sessions. Rich merchants and traders and artisans began to attend them, and in the north, in the busy farms and hamlets where wool was manufactured, large numbers of the rural folk also went to chapel. But in the country districts of the south the belief that there could only be one church still remained strong. Squire, innkeeper, farmers, and cottagers all went to the parish church.

The penal laws against Roman Catholics, on the other hand, were positively increased. An old lady, who was still alive in 1825, remembered going to Mass at night in a cart, with the priest disguised as a countryman. Yet many of the sternest of the laws were no longer enforced. Priests were no longer hanged, neither were Roman Catholic laymen imprisoned because of their religion.

In the early 18th century amonst the wealthy peers, richer gentlemen, statesmen and learned men of cities and towns, the old religious fervour was dead or dying. People were scandalised to learn that polite society played cards, and went to concerts on Sunday. In the Church of England a very large number of the clergy were still very badly paid, and very poorly educated. They were therefore looked down upon by men of fashion. John Eachard, who wrote a book in 1698 on the "Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy and Religion," spoke of the little country schools designed by their first founders only for the advantage of poor children of the parish, and in which the masters could seldom teach more than reading and writing, but from which ambitious lads were

sent up to Oxford and Cambridge. There, where in the Middle Ages a poor man could pay his way, such a lad had to become "servitor" to a wealthy undergraduate; he was engaged in "Bedmaking, Chamber-sweeping, and Water-fetching" most of the day, and went to lectures as best he could.

"It is ten times more happy both for a Lad and the Church to be a Corn-cutter or a Tooth-drawer, to make or mend shoes, or be of any inferior Profession than to be invited and promised the Convenience of a Learned Education and to have his Name only stand airing upon the College Tables, and his chief Business shall be to buy Eggs and Butter. . . . Scarce the fifth part continue after their taking the first Degree. As for the rest, having exactly learned Quid est Logica? and Quot sunt Virtutes Morales? * down they go by the first Carrier, upon the top of the Pack, into the West, or North or elsewhere . . . and then for the Propagation of the Gospel."

A poor boy thus educated, might become a very noble, simple and saintly parson; or he might be a clergyman on Sundays only. In Fielding's "Joseph Andrews" we have Mr. Abraham Adams, the curate, and Parson Trulliber, as two very different results of this system—

"Mr. Abraham Adams was an excellent scholar. He was a perfect master of the Greek and Latin languages; to which he added a great share of knowledge in the Oriental tongues; and could read and translate French, Italian, and Spanish. He had applied many years to the most severe study, and had treasured up a fund of learning rarely to be met with in a University. . . . His virtue, and his other qualifications . . . had so much endeared and well recommended him to a bishop, that at the age of fifty he was provided with a handsome income of twenty-three pounds a year; which, however, he could not make any great figure with, because he lived in a dear county, and was a little encumbered with a wife and six children . . . .

"Adams had no nearer access to Sir Thomas or my lady than through the waiting-gentlewoman. . . . They both regarded the Curate as a kind of domestic only. . . .

"Parson Adams came to the house of parson Trulliber, whom he found stript to his waistcoat, with an apron on, and a pail in his hand, just come from serving his hogs; for Mr. Trulliber was a parson on Sundays, but all the other six days might more properly be called a farmer. His wife milked his cows, managed his dairy, and followed the markets with butter and eggs. The hogs fell chiefly to his care which he carefully waited on at home, and attended to fairs. His voice was loud and hoarse, and his accent extremely broad."

* "*What is Logic? How many moral virtues are there?*"

In the old-world towns and villages of the period, however, the middle and lower classes still went to church, or attended the registered meeting-houses of the Nonconformists. The law indeed still enjoined that all should go to the one or the other, under penalty of a fine. In church and chapel these simpler folk were taught their duty to the king and

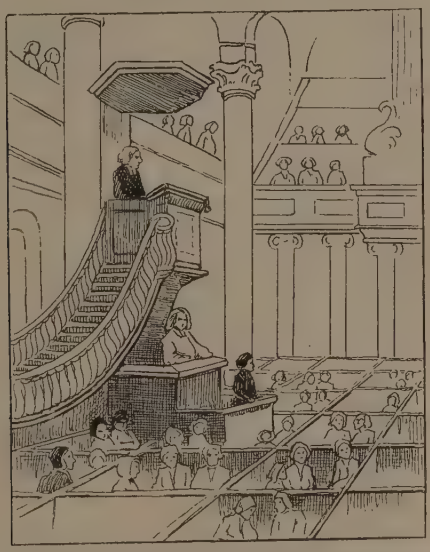

Fig. 45.—A three-decker pulpit, high-backed pews and heavy gallery, in an 18th century church.
(*From a picture by Hogarth.*)

to each other. From his cushioned family pew the squire could survey the people or sleep at his ease. The farmers sat or slumbered in smaller box-pews, while "the poor" sat on backless benches. In old-world towns the wide box-pew filled every corner; large galleries, also, were erected and filled with still more pews; while the "three decker" pulpit held in descending order parson, curate, and parish

clerk. The Puritan idea of Sabbath still controlled the laws; no stage-coach or waggon could legally travel on Sundays. People who loitered in the streets during service-time, or children playing there on Sundays, could be arrested, while a baker who made or delivered bread was liable to prosecution. No doubt the laws were often not enforced.* A mayor of Deal, however, elected in 1703, wrote in his diary—

"In the afternoon (Sunday) the Jurats and Common Council came to my house to go with me to Church, as was the custom. . . . As I came by the 'India Arms' Inn, I saw a coach making ready to start for Canterbury. I sent for the coachman, and told him, if he was not upon the King's business he should not go till the next morning. He complied with my request."

There is much evidence that the Mayor of Deal was not exceptional in thus enforcing the law.

Even amongst the middle and lower classes the old passionate beliefs seemed to have died down in the early 18th century. Men, as a whole, were more tolerant of each other, and were quieter and more respectable in their church-going. The bitterness which had existed between churchmen and nonconformists began to disappear, and here and there a parson and a nonconformist minister were willing occasionally to dine together. In churches and chapels the sermons were no longer fiery exhortations or denunciations spoken as the inspiration of the moment dictated. Churchmen and non-conformists avoided emotion in preaching, and kept to plain questions of everyday duty. Most men, in fact, agreed with Alexander Pope when he said—

"For forms of faith let graceless zealots fight,
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right." †

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* *See Defoe's praise of Yarmouth in Chap. VIII., p.* 174.

† *In spite of this prevailing sentiment there were throughout the period a considerable number of High Churchmen, who taught the old Catholic belief that Baptism and the Holy Communion are Sacraments essential to salvation.*

There still persisted, however, from Puritan days a great horror of anything which seemed to smack of "Papistry." Clergymen, who, like George Herbert before them, loved outward order and beauty in their services, who put candlesticks on the communion table, who repaired their stained glass windows, and who taught that all men must be baptised and come regularly to Holy Communion, were accused of preferring the trappings of religion to its spirit. Under this influence church buildings were often neglected; floor pavings fell into disrepair; bells were sold; and transepts and Lady Chapels were actually used on occasion for factories, workshops, bakehouses, and the like. While population was growing rapidly, few new churches were built. In the growing industrial districts of the Midlands and the North, and in outlying parts of London, many of the people could not, if they would, go to church for sheer lack of room. Dean Swift, indeed, observed—

> "Five parts out of six of the people are absolutely hindered from hearing divine service, particularly here in London, where a single minister with one or two curates, has the care of some 20,000 souls incumbent on him."

In the year 1738, however, a new movement began which stirred up the embers in many a small village and many a big town parish; it spread to the neglected districts where no religious services were ever held, and produced a blaze of religious feeling which scandalised many quiet folk.

In 1703 there was born at Epworth, in Lincolnshire, a clergyman's son, John Wesley. His father had once been a nonconformist; his mother was the daughter of a dissenting minister who had been ejected from his living in 1662. John Wesley came, indeed, of a strong, vigorous, and somewhat stern stock, and was bred to a deep love for the Church of

England. Eleven years after his birth there was born at the Bell Inn, at Gloucester, a very different child, George Whitefield, an innkeeper's son, warm-hearted, wild, and impulsive—on occasion full of fun and naughtiness, at other times filled with a passionate devotion to religion. Both lads went to the University of Oxford, the one in 1720 as a well-to-do undergraduate, to be followed later by his brother Charles, the other in 1732 as a poor servitor. By the time that Whitefield came there John Wesley had become a Fellow of Lincoln College, a tutor, and an ordained clergyman.

In those days the professors, tutors, and wealthier undergraduates of Oxford led too often in the grey old city a life of luxurious idleness. Many professors neglected their lectures; many tutors did not trouble about their students, and rich undergraduates waited on by poor servitors, who were too much overworked to study to advantage, spent their time and their money very much as they pleased. Every man who came to Oxford must be a member of the Church of England, yet this was often a mere form. Men took the Sacrament in order to obey the rules, and religion in the deeper sense seemed to John and Charles Wesley to be utterly neglected. In 1729, therefore, they formed a small college society of young men, who determined to cast off worldly ways. They agreed to take the Holy Communion every week, to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, and all through Lent, to avoid luxury in food and dress, to visit poor people and the prisoners in the gaol, and to meet regularly in each other's rooms to read and discuss the Bible together. They rose at 4 a.m., and carefully shunned frivolity of life or conversation. Their fellow-students laughed at these careful, methodical ways, and nicknamed them "Methodists." In 1733, Charles Wesley met in Oxford the poor servitor, George Whitefield. He, too, was impressed with the idleness and luxury of Oxford. His gaiety had died

away; he had taken to fasting and wearing old and dirty clothes, and was often full of deep religious melancholy. He now joined the Society of Methodists. In this way there began, within the Church of England, a movement which afterwards grew famous. When these young men left Oxford they took their enthusiasm with them.

At first nothing came of the Society of Methodists. But in 1738, after John Wesley had returned to England from the colony of Georgia, where he had been working as a parson, an idea came to him which was to set men's souls in a blaze. The world seemed to him a sinful place full of idle, selfish, neglected men who were drifting to perdition. One night, at a religious service which he was attending, he suddenly became convinced that no man, unaided, could save himself from hell. Not even the Sacraments of the Church were sufficient to aid him. A man must feel suddenly and with full assurance that Christ by His death upon the Cross had freed him from his sins. This belief Wesley called "a saving faith." A man who once felt it, and who lived in this belief, would, he was assured, thenceforward conquer sin, and lead a pure and holy life. This Wesley determined to teach and preach throughout the length and breadth of the land, whenever and wherever a clergyman would lend him his pulpit. At about the same time George Whitefield and Charles Wesley made the same resolve.

They went forth to preach a doctrine which in itself was not new. But they preached it with passion, fire, and enthusiasm in an age unaccustomed to these things. They spoke without written notes, and they roused the quiet congregations of people to fervour and to tears. They went into gaols and preached to the prisoners. When they rode on coaches they exhorted the passengers; they stopped people whom they met on the roads; they expounded to people with whom they sat at table in the inns. Many scoffed, but many

were strangely moved. Some shouted in opposition, others sobbed bitterly, and even fell swooning upon the ground. John Wesley preached eloquently but with restraint. George Whitefield often burst into tears while in wonderful language he described to his breathless and listening audiences the awful fate in store for those who led a life of sin.

Both preachers were ordained clergymen. But very soon many of the clergy refused to allow them to preach, though others still welcomed them. Within the parishes to which they came they founded societies like their own in Oxford, of people who, while still belonging to the Church of England, wished to meet together every week to encourage each other in religious life, and to confess to each other their sins. In 1739, too, they began to build chapels or meeting-houses for Methodists, not to take the place of churches, but to supplement them.

John Wesley had been, at first at any rate, what we should call a High Churchman. He had urged men to be baptised in the English Church, and to go very frequently to the Holy Communion, and to fast in Lent. He wished to be obedient to the bishops, and not to create disorder in the Church. But as time went on difficulties arose. The clergy often refused to receive the Methodist preachers in their churches. George Whitefield found a way out. In 1739 he was at Bristol. Near by, at Kingswood, was a great population of coal-miners who had no church and who knew little of religion. Whitefield went out to preach to them. Standing in the open air upon a low hill he took for his text the first verse of the Sermon on the Mount. Two hundred poor men listened breathless. Some wept. They told others. Next time he preached the crowd increased. Vast numbers assembled. On one occasion there were 20,000. Men covered the ground and climbed the trees to hear the great preacher, while rich merchants drove out from Bristol in their carriages to hear him.

From Bristol Whitefield travelled over England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, preaching in fields, on commons, in market-places, at fairs, in streets, and in churchyards, as well as in churches and in chapels, to all who would listen. The poor, the ignorant, and the neglected came in crowds to hear him. Even the wealthy Countess of Huntingdon made him her chaplain.

John and Charles Wesley were at first greatly shocked at the idea of "field preaching." It seemed to them unworthy of a clergyman of the English Church. But in time they, too, followed suit. They even allowed laymen to travel about and preach. John Wesley himself preached to great congregations of 5000 or 10,000, or even 20,000 people. This was the beginning of a movement which was, in the next age, to produce great changes inside the church, and profoundly to affect the lives of many thousands of poor men and women in a period of sweeping industrial and social development.

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N.B. For Domestic Architecture and Costume, see p. 22.

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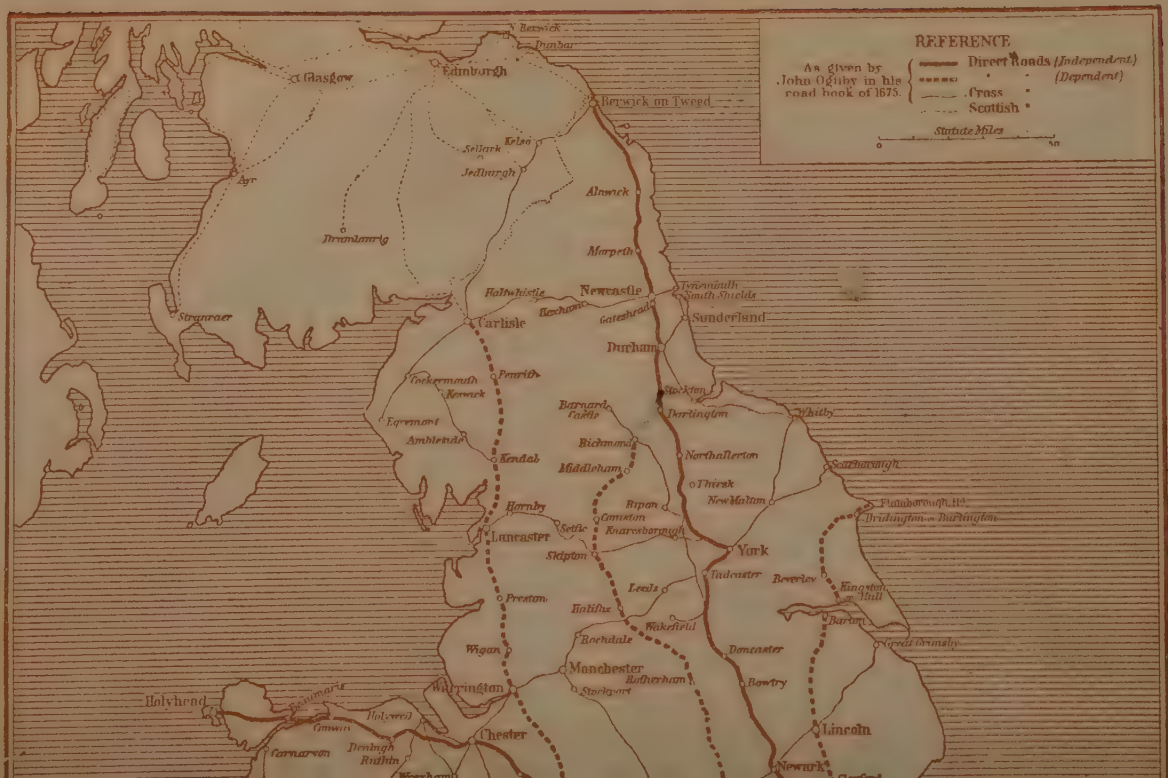
REFERENCE
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Direct Roads (Independent)
(Dependent)
Cross
Scottish
Statute Miles
Berwick
Dunbar
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Berwick on Tweed
Selkirk
Kelso
Jedburgh
Ayr
Alnwick
Dumfarmerig
Morpeth
Hathwhistle
Newcastle
Tynemouth
South Shields
Stranraer
Carlisle
Lochmaben
Gateshead
Sunderland
Durham
Cockermmouth
Penrith
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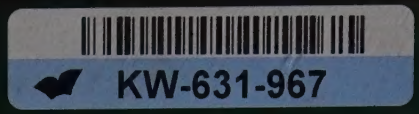
MAP OF THE 17TH CENTURY ROADS

The London Geographical Institute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